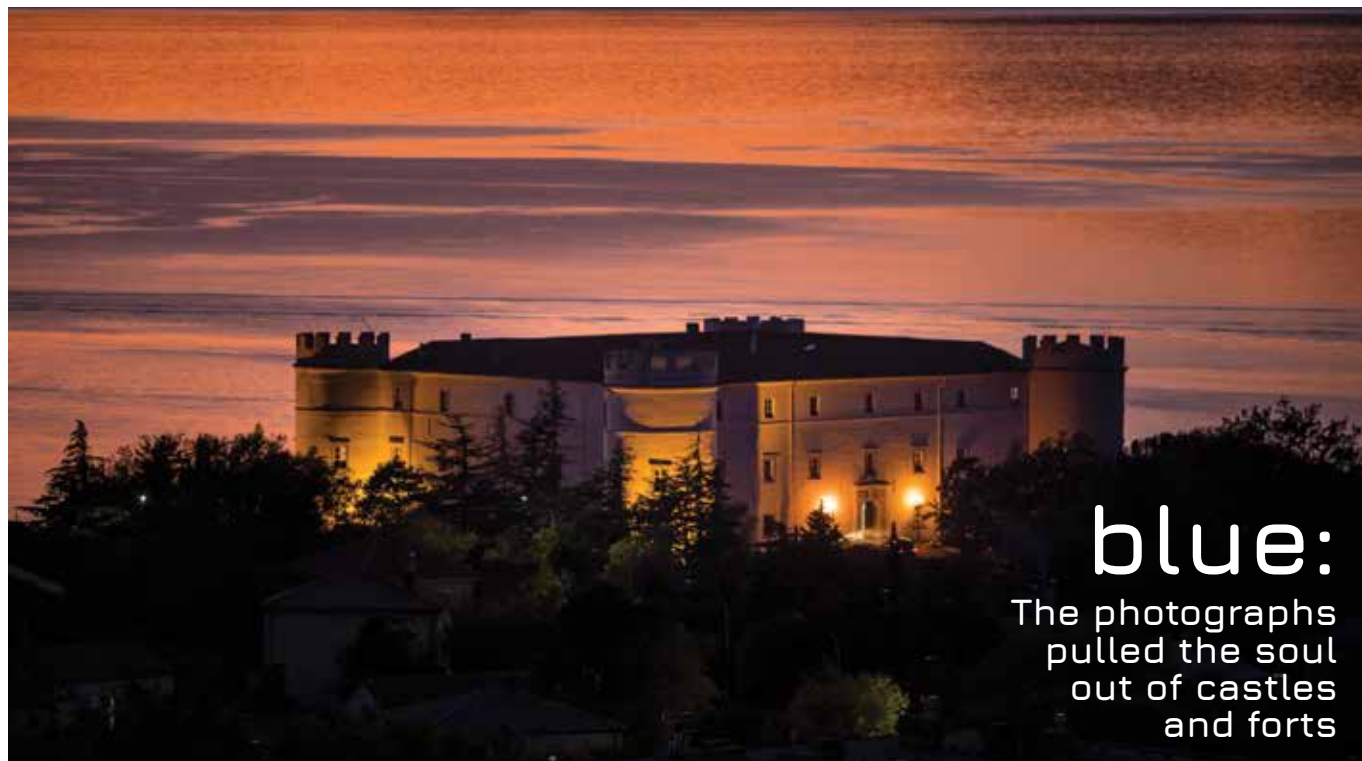


green&blue

Primorje-Gorski Kotar County Magazine | No4 | International edition



blue:

The photographs
pulled the soul
out of castles
and forts



green:

The bear and
wolf "whisperer"

Primorje - Gorski Kotar County | at a glance



Republic of Croatia



Primorje - Gorski Kotar
County

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Prefect:

Zlatko Komadina

Deputy prefects:

Marina Medarić
Vojko Braut
Petar Mamula

President of the County

Assembly:

Marko Boras Mandić

Total population

266,503

Most populated

City of Rijeka • 108,622
Municipality of Viškovo
16,015

Least populated

Municipality of
Brod Moravice
667

Towns

14

Municipalities

22

Settlements

510

Area

3,588 km²

Length of the coast

1,235 km

Largest islands

Cres & Krk • 40,578 ha

Smallest island

Boljkovac (Rab) • 0.11 ha

Highest settlement

Begovo Razdolje
- 1,060 above sea level

Highest mountain peak

Kula - Bjelolasica
- 1,534 above sea level

Roads: 3,490 km

Railroads: 135.5 km

Ports: 101

Airports: 4



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Dear Readers,

in your hands is yet another edition of 'Green & Blue', the publication by the County of Primorje-Gorski Kotar intended for our guests and business partners, the dear readers who are always welcome in the green-blue county.

There are few places in the world where you have the chance to encompass with one view a region which from one side embraces the sea, whilst from the other side the tame mountains watch over, a region where you can visit 55 islands, sail into 86 harbours or from ski slopes look at the sea, as it is possible in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. At the meeting point of the northern Adriatic and the mountains of southwest Croatia, millennia have left traces of Mediterranean and central European cultures and massive historical changes. Primorje-Gorski Kotar County is a source of cultural richness, no less than five hundred and twenty cultural treasures, from palaces to castles to urban and rural ethno-zones, are entered into the Register of Immovable Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia. This is the area where Croatian literacy was born and Croatian legislation was conceived. It

is right here in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County where the old lady of Croatian tourism is situated – Opatija, where the first Croatian hotel was built, and today it still leads the Croatian tourist appeal of our region.

Thanks to the geographical position, right at the crossroads of central Europe and the Adriatic-Mediterranean routes, our regional area has always attracted foreign entrepreneurs. Continuous efforts to encourage openness to the global market and attract foreign investments, have enabled Primorje-Gorski Kotar County a ranking amongst the most developed of Croatia's regions.

Primorje-Gorski Kotar County is a member of the Assembly of European Regions, the Association of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, a co-founder of the Adriatic Euroregion and the Euroregion of Alps-Adriatic, through which it strengthens cooperation with European partners and business friends.

I hope that you will have the opportunity to get to know the beauty of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, and that you read about some of the attractions of the county in the magazine 'Green & Blue'



Prefect of the County
Zlatko Komadina

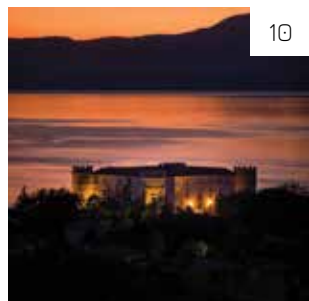
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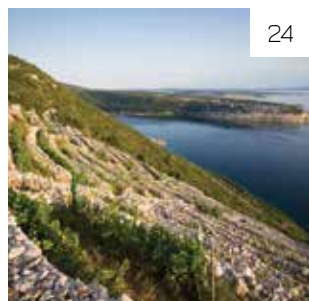
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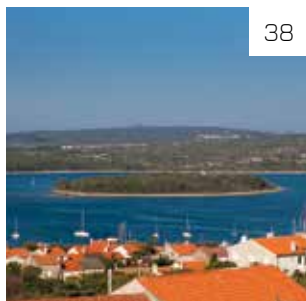


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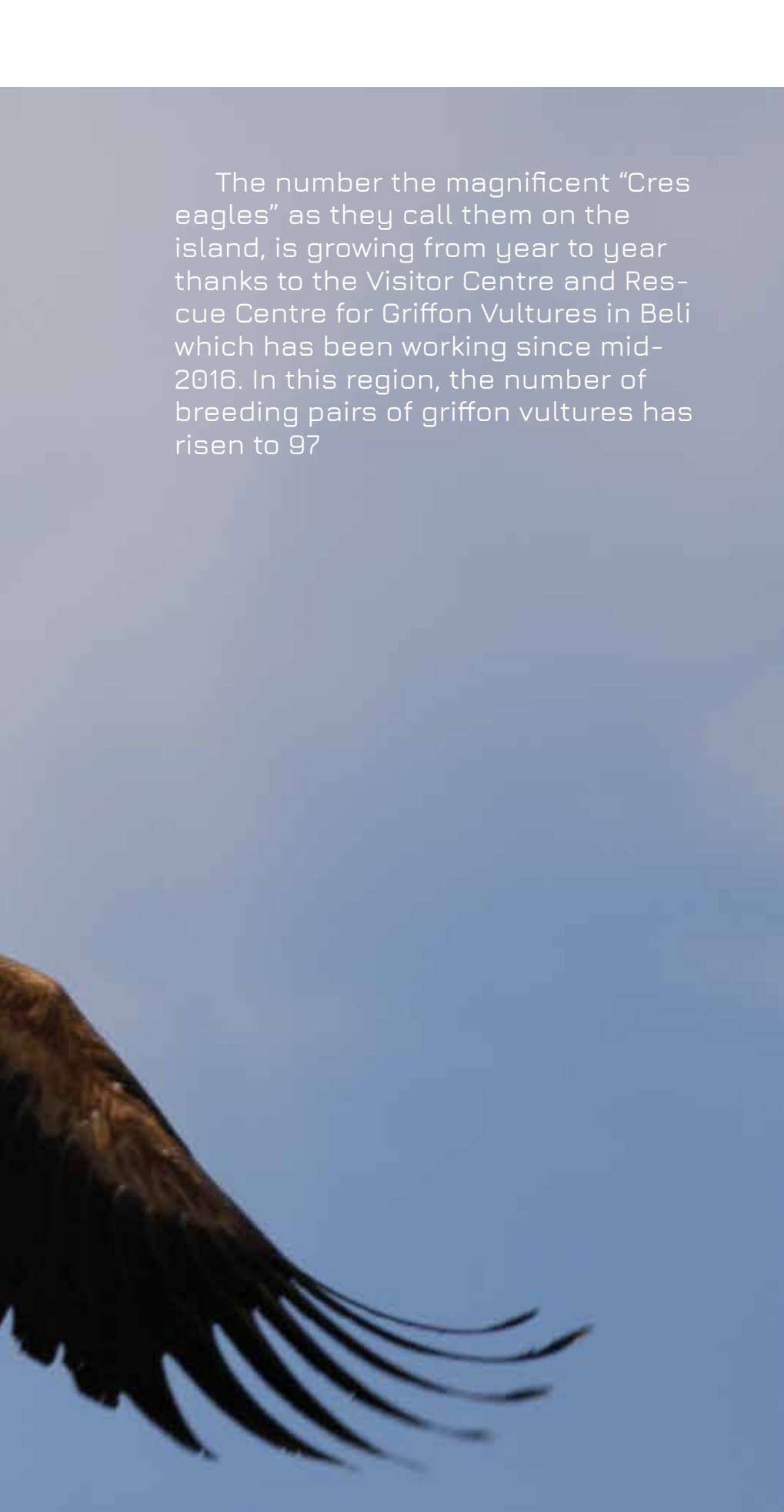
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THE RESCUE OF GRIFFON VULTURES

In the rescuing of the vultures, minutes are important



After recovering, the vultures are released into the wild, and thanks to GPS transmitters their movements can be monitored accurately



The number the magnificent “Cres eagles” as they call them on the island, is growing from year to year thanks to the Visitor Centre and Rescue Centre for Griffon Vultures in Beli which has been working since mid-2016. In this region, the number of breeding pairs of griffon vultures has risen to 97

97 pairs of griffon vultures fly in the Cres sky. They calmly sail on the air currents and with a keen eye they look for food, the carcasses of animals which without these “natural ecologists” would pollute the environment for a long time. The vultures are always in pairs because once they find a mate they remain with them for life, and that can be up to 40 years.

The number the magnificent “Cres eagles” as they call them on the island, is growing from year to year thanks to the Visitor Centre and Rescue Centre for Griffon Vultures in Beli which in its current set up has been working since mid-2016. Since the complex located in Cres’s Tramuntana was taken over by the county’s public institution Nature, they have completely renovated the buildings, a new aviary has been built, a multimedia educational exhibition about the vultures in the former regional school and a small ethnographic museum have been added, whilst on the upper floors, there are equipped classrooms and a space for workshops plus dormitories for volunteers.

The centre’s most important task is the care of the vultures that live on the Kvarner islands, the last habitat of these endangered vultures in Croatia, and the stable number of vultures, as well as the increasing number of rescued young birds, are proof that this task is being led successfully.

Namely, Cres’s griffon vultures are unique in the world because they nest on the cliffs above the sea. Once, many millennia ago, these cliffs were high mountains, and as the sea level rose after the last ice age, the nests of Cres’s vultures ended up directly above the surface of the sea. Therefore the young birds, still not strong enough, during their first flights often fall into the sea from where under their own strength they are no longer capable to pull themselves out. They need human help, and so it is exceptionally important



The visitor centre in Beli

to educate the local population properly, as well as tourists and boat owners who often sail this region, about how to act when they see a vulture in danger. The training has obviously been a success because in 2018 alone a record number of vultures, 14 of them, were saved, with the majority being rescued by the local people, tourists or owners of tourist boats. The small number of employees at the Beli centre, or even the whole of the Nature institution, would not be able to cover the huge region over which the vultures roam alone.

The innkeeper who saved 60 vultures

Amongst the vulture rescuers is local caterer Mario Sintić who stands out this year by participating in the saving of as many as eight birds. He remembers well the first vulture he rescued from the sea, it was in the mid-1980s. He was fishing for shrimps in the sea around Beli when he caught sight of a vulture drowning.

Somehow he pulled it out of the water and left it to dry out, and what he remembered the most was that the bird was so hungry that it even ate all the little scorpionfish that they gave it.



The centre in Beli also offers educational and tourist features

Since there was no recovery centre at that time, the rescued vultures were left on high spots so that they could take off again. Since then Mario Sintić, or Marjeto as they call him in Beli, has saved about 60 vultures, and asked why he does it he simply replies "Because I'm from here, and they're from here!"

He had one of the most interesting recent rescues during the last sixteen match of the 2018 World Cup between Croatia and Denmark. During halftime, he received a call saying that a vulture was seen in trouble and needed help and so Sintić without thinking jumped into his boat and went to the rescue. Although he was a passionate football fan, as well as the president of Pomorac 1921 football club from Kostrena, the rescue of the vulture was his priority, and so his friends teased him by saying that the vultures were more important to him than football.

In the centre injured and exhausted vultures recover which are then released back into the wild. With this, the chances of the survival of this endangered and strictly protected species of vulture which in Croatia only lives in the Kvarner region are increased.

A recovery centre and not a zoo

Although Beli, given the attractiveness of what is on offer there, is not satisfactorily marketed on the tourist market, more and more visitors are finding their way to this centuries-old village and vulture recovery centre and looking for information about the intriguing birds which are protected there. About 3,200 people visited the centre in the first year, in the second about 5,000, and in the first ten months of 2018 there were more than 6,500 visitors. The centre is slowly becoming one more jewel of the tourist offer of the region of Tramuntana, which already offers walking and hiking trails, a beach with the first zip line above the sea in Europe, a renovated olive mill in the village, and many more interesting features. In the centre's courtyard a simple

Rescued vultures located in the aviary until they recover and get strong enough to be able to survive in the wild



catering facility with a souvenir shop has been opened, where every visitor can try some refreshing juices or teas made from local therapeutic plants or purchase a local souvenir.

Although people can find out about all the aspects of the life of the griffon vultures in the contemporary multimedia exhibition in the centre, most visitors want to see the real birds which are found there. The centre's employees patiently explain that they have not come to a zoo but to a recovery centre where the vultures have to physically and psychologically get stronger before they are released into the wild. If tourists approached them every day, they would be under great stress and their recovery would be more difficult. Therefore cameras have been installed in the aviary, so what the vultures do can be observed carefully via screens inside the centre.



Rescuing of a young vulture which during its first flights fell into the sea from where it is no longer capable to escape under its own strength

Kvarner flew over the Adriatic

To show that the vultures are successfully recovering can be proved by Kvarner, a young vulture who at the end of September 2018 completed an unbelievable venture for his species. Although he had just been released from the recovery centre, he flew over the Adriatic Sea on a route from Martinšćica on the island of Cres to Italy's Ravenna, 170 kilometres, in less than three hours. It is the first, even in global terms, documented flight by a griffon vulture above the surface of the sea. Namely, griffon vultures,

although excellent flyers, reluctantly cover great distance over the sea because to fly they use the thermals, vertical columns of air, of which there are none above the open sea. On that day Kvarner covered 370 kilometres, starting from the islet of Plavnik around noon, to settle in the interior of Italy, 20 kilometres or so north of Parma, on the banks of the River Po, about 6.30pm.

Last year 13 recovered vultures were successfully released back into the wild, six in May and seven in September, and thanks to GPS transmitters, which were attached to them, their movements can be monitored accurately.

RESCUE OF A LYNX, RISNJAK NATIONAL PARK



The first photograph of Martin, after he was found by the hunter Darko Tus

The rescue and return to the wild of Martin the lynx

This is the first case in Croatia of the rescue of a lynx cub who recovered and returned to the wild in a short time. The cases of the recovery of lynxes and their return to the wild are very rare

The story of Martin the lynx began last year in July. As a less than two-kilogram cub, he was found by chance in the hinterland of Bribir by the hunter Darko Tus, not far from the Chapel of St Martin after whom the lynx later got his name. Realising that the cub had obviously been abandoned, Darko Tus rescued the visibly exhausted lynx, took him home and informed the president, also named Darko Tus, of the Vepar Hunter's Lodge in Bribir, the about the unusual case.

With the finding, and timely informing of the authorities about little Martin, who was most probably injured by his mother, the hunters had saved his life! The story that follows could be called a historical success because it concerns the first case of the rescuing of a lynx cub in Croatia, who in a short time recovered and was returned to the wild. Such cases of the recovery of lynxes and their return to the wild are very rare. Examples have been recorded in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, however, the lynxes in those cases were older than our little Martin!

The first examination and stabilisation of the lynx's condition, with the staff of county's public institution Nature, the intervention team for wolves and lynxes and a representative of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Zagreb, was made by Crikvenica veterinarian Hrvoje Car, who until that time in his two-year veterinary practice had "not had any work with lynxes." The further recovery of this strictly protected and endangered species, under expert supervision, was made possible by Zagreb Zoo, where in a special enclosure, closed to the public, Martin improved very well, and with a special dietary plan, he was encouraged to learn how to hunt.

In October of the same year, when he was strong enough, he was transferred to a so-called adaptation enclosure in the forest of the Risnjak National Park. He stayed there until the end of Jan-



Martin headed to the north and at the end of April he was located in Slovenia, where he was also photographed by a camera trap

uary 2018, along with the care of the hardworking park's staff, the entire intervention team and staff of Zagreb Zoo, so that he would be fully adapted to life in the wild.

Just before being released the lynx received a GPS collar, in order to follow his movements and how he got along. And Martin did very well, initially staying exclusively in the region of the Risnjak National Park, where he "wintered" and successfully found prey. However, as it is with wild animals, who do not recognise borders, Martin moved north towards Slovenia, where from then on he has been occasionally followed by Slovenian colleagues.



The young lynx was cared for in the surgery of Crikvenica veterinarian Hrvoje Car

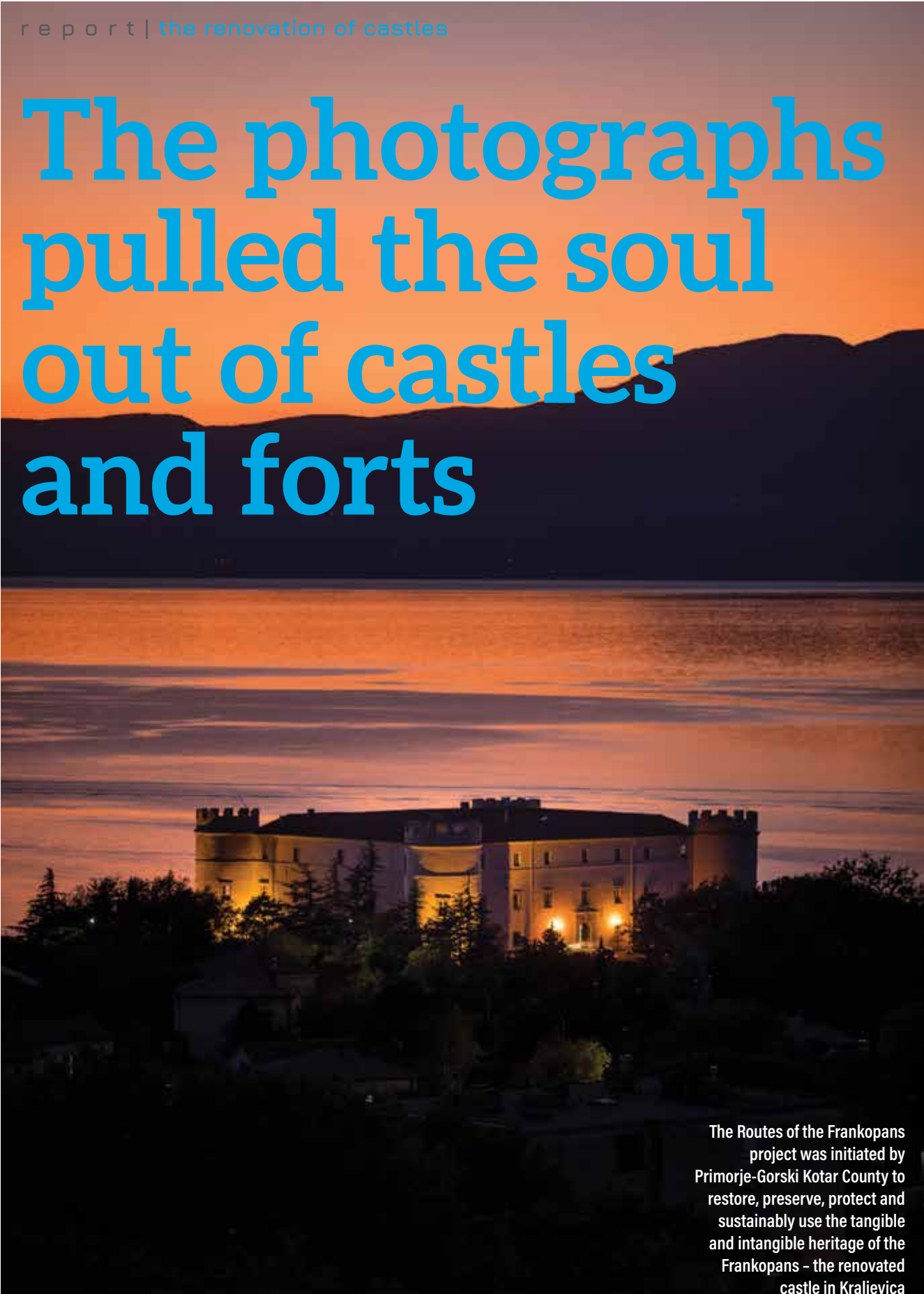


Martin the lynx after being released into the world where he adapted very well, photographed by the national park's camera trap

There are very few lynxes, every individual is important

It is estimated that in Croatia there live between forty and sixty lynxes, and so every individual is extremely valuable. In Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, one of the regions with the richest biological diversity in Europe, lynxes live most often in the Gorski Kotar region. At one time lynxes had disappeared from these regions, however, in the 1970s a reintroduction programme of this species into Slovenia and Croatia was successfully implemented, and since then they can be seen, if not so often, again in the wild.

The photographs pulled the soul out of castles and forts



The Routes of the Frankopans project was initiated by Primorje-Gorski Kotar County to restore, preserve, protect and sustainably use the tangible and intangible heritage of the Frankopans – the renovated castle in Kraljevica

Photographer Petar Fabijan from Rijeka spent a month compiling his album, leaving for work before dawn and returning in the early hours. He was enchanted by castles, walked through the fog, flew through the air, and was once left breathless after an unexpected encounter in the forest.

In the old town of Grobnik, which rises 466 metres above sea level, the photo monograph *Routes of the Frankopans* was presented. The photo monograph, which features 160 photos, is part of the cultural-tourist project *The Routes of the Frankopans* and is worth more than 8 million euros. This book gives readers a thorough insight into the life of the Frankopans, from customs and fashion, culture and architecture, and the law of the Frankopan era. The *Routes of the Frankopans* project was initiated by Primorje-Gorski Kotar County about 20 years ago in order to restore, preserve, protect and sustainably use the tangible and intangible heritage of the Frankopans. The project was granted more than 6 million euros in grants from the structural funds of the European Union.

An exciting story

At the presentation of the photo monograph, the prefect of Primorje-Gorski Kotar Zlatko Komadina recalled how the project started almost by accident. After a conversation with the late mayor of Vinodol Municipality Ivica Crnić, the restoration of Drivenik castle began, and everything turned into a serious European project that restores castles in bad conditions, Komadina said, emphasising that the castles in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County are treasures of the whole of Croatia. The valuable heritage will now be used to promote culture and tourism in Kvarner.

The introductory text of the monograph was written by Velid Đekić, and the photographs are

by Petar Fabijan. The author of the texts, Velid Đekić, pointed out that the history of the Frankopans is a very exciting story about the noblemen who marked five and a half centuries of Croatian history.

'I had the honour of being the editorial writer, and it was not easy to summarise the story to ten pages. The Frankopans' story is multi-layered and one of the most recognisable stories in the whole of Croatian history. They were builders, soldiers, conspirators, writers, legislators, people who promoted the religious word, politicians... To cover this layering in a short text was not very easy. It was challenging,' said Đekić, adding that he had visited many of the castles before participating in the creation of the book. The photo monograph, of course, also refers to the Vinodol Code, a legal document of European value that is associated with the Frankopans and the era of their rule.

Photographer Petar Fabijan from Rijeka spent a month

compiling his album, leaving for work before dawn and returning in the early hours. The work was also a pleasure.

'I am very proud and satisfied that I participated in such a large project and that I managed to learn at least partially the heritage of the Frankopans. The castles are beautiful, even the ruined ones. I tried to pull out the soul from them, and when you spend days and days on the field, you gather enough material for a good story. Not only photographic material,' Fabijan said.

'In Grižane, the ruins of the castle are just five minutes' walk from the nearest houses. I set out to take night photography. Pitch black. I walked five minutes there and five minutes back. Everything went as it should. I went to the same location on another day. In the middle of the day. I went down the same way, and ten metres in front of me, a wild boar roared. I was in shock,' the photographer recounted an unpleasant encounter.

Five and half centuries of history

There were also other unexpected situations. Although not so dangerous. More situations to get angry about and then laugh about.



From the presentation of the photo monograph in the old town of Grobnik - Petar Fabijan is, of course, with his camera

The remains of the Ledenice castle taken by drone



Stara Sušica



Without the Frankopans, our landscape would be significantly different - the castle in Drivenik

Grobnik



'When I photographed the castle in Bakar, I had problems with parked cars in front of the castle. After the cars were removed, someone unloaded firewood in front of the castle. And there was

no choice but to wait a few days for the castle's neighbour to chop up that wood,' Fabijan recounts an incident in front of Bakar castle, which gained its present appearance after the earthquake in 1750.

The photographer recalls special scenes: the morning fog in Brod na Kupi.

'The castle in Brod na Kupi is not actually very photogenic, but when combined with the morning fog, it looks excellent,' Fabijan remarked.

The interesting feature of the Zrinski castle is the three secret underground passages that were used for escape in case of danger, and their exits were in the centre of the parish church, on the bank of the River Kupa and in the Vučja cave. The escape tunnel is still visible today and partially passable.

He waited a long time for some locations, such as the renovated

The revival of heritage

The Routes of the Frankopans cultural-tourist project was conceived with the aim of reviving heritage and creating a new cultural-tourist product that enriches the offer of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, as well as Croatia. The method of realising the project was conceived through year-round activities with the aim of telling the historical story as well as possible. The project resulted in a series of newly created tourist content and products, including this beautiful photo monograph. The Frankopan castles are a source of inspiration, and their very sight evokes the spirit of the past. With their beauty, they speak of the distinctiveness, size and value of the places of life of the Frankopan noble family and geographically connect the Kvarner and mountain regions of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

Frankopan castle in Kraljevica. The book about the pride of Kraljevica reveals the following to us: 'If the Zrinski-Frankopan conspiracy had been successful, the Nova Kraljevica castle would have become the focal point of the creation of a new Croatia, and the town of Kraljevica would have the status of the capital of the modern Croatian state. Legend has it that the conspiracy was hatched in this very castle.'

We don't have to write a conclusion because the book itself offers it to us:

'As counts, governors, bans, warriors, politicians, as well as writers, orators, poets, legislators, publishers of religious and secular books, draftsmen and painters, the Frankopans created Croatian history and culture for five and a half centuries. They left behind an immense wealth of tangible and intangible heritage. They built numerous fortresses and developed many towns. They were donors to numerous churches and monasteries. They had marriage ties with the

The costumes of associations involved in the preservation of the Frankopans' heritage



Zrinskis and with the most important European families. Without the Frankopans, our landscape would be significantly different, museums and sacred collections emptier, the Croatian language poorer, and history textbooks much thinner.'

A route with 17 castles and three sacred complexes

The cultural-tourist route The Routes of the Frankopans includes 17 castles, fortified towns and castles. The list consists of the castles of Gradec on Krk, Krk, Grobnik, Trsat, Drivenik, Grižane and Bakar, the tower in Bribir, the castle with the tower Kvadrac Novi Vinodolski, the Zrinski castle in Brod na Kupa, the Old Town of the Zrinskis in Kraljevica, the Old Town of Ledenice, the Old Town Hreljin, the Nova Kraljevica, Severin and Stara Sušica castles and the Zrinski castle in Čabar. Three sacred complexes also have their place in the project: the Franciscan monastery with the Church of the Annunciation of Mary on Košljun, the Pauline monastery in Crikvenica and the Gomirje monastery.



The Frankopan castles are a source of inspiration. The very sight of them evokes the spirit of the past - Krk castle



Trsat



Severin na Kupa

BENEATH THE SURFACE OF VRANA LAKE



The hidden shores of Vrana Lake

In search of the remains of a sunken castle



Marinko Babić, the photographer of the underwater beauties of Vrana Lake

Vrana Lake on the island of Cres still conceals many secrets, although in recent years it has been researched by hydrologists, geologists, biologists and other scientists from various institutes and faculties. Recently a group of

Vrana Lake, the most significant natural reservoir of potable water on the Croatian islands, was explored underwater by Marinko Babić after he had already “analysed” Plitvice Lakes, the water around Palagruža and the Brijuni Islands, and the rivers Krupa, Zrmanja, Mrežnica, Korana and Dobra. He was not able to resist the mysteriousness which accompanies the story of Vrana Lake, nor its fantastic transparency

French scientists, archaeologists and palaeontologists took samples from the bottom of the lake to study the age of the rocks and to better understand the origin of the lake. The natural beauty of Vrana Lake also attracts photographers, however, few have had the opportunity to peek below its surface with a camera. The last one was Marinko Babić, a Slavonian living in Pula, a nature lover and active advocate for its protection. Since everything as he says “above water has more or less been filmed”, he decided to

take to underwater photography.

“Beneath the surface, there exist many places and scenes which have not yet been captured by a camera and that is not without reason. In many rivers, lakes, pools and ponds in Croatia underwater photography is an almost “impossible mission”, but at the same time a great challenge, an opportunity for adventure and a special satisfaction”, says Marinko who only does freediving, unhindered by equipment, without the bubbles and noise that diving equipment



Vrana Lake has the most transparent Croatian fresh water because its visibility ranges from 10 to 24 metres



Mirror effect



The European pike is a large predator, with a slender body, exceptionally fast and agile



The building of the water pumping facility of Vrana Lake

makes, using only natural light, focussed solely on photography.

“The photographs are taken literally between two breaths, and I use the break between two dives to relax, meditate, as well as to review the photographs, the analysis of mistakes and planning. Over time the body adapts to the lack of oxygen and the excess of carbon dioxide, so I can stay longer under the water and dive even deeper. Moving through the water becomes economic, without superfluous movements and the unnecessary use of energy. The body slides through the water relaxed and smoothly, I feel less and less like an intruder, and more and more like a part of the underwater environment where I am”, as Marinko describes his photographic and diving technique.

After he “analysed” Plitvice Lakes, the water around Palagruža and the Brijuni Islands, the rivers Krupa, Zmanja, Mrežnica, Korana

and Dobra, where he photographed various fish, as well as jellyfish, sea slugs, shrimps, Mediterranean monk seals and loggerhead sea turtles, he was attracted to the fact that Vrana Lake had the most transparent Croatian fresh water because its visibility stretched from 10 to 24 metres. He was not able to resist this.

“There were no great surprises in Vrana Lake. Nevertheless, the scenes which are etched in my memory the most are the moments when pikes were chasing shoals of chubs, and the surreal scenes of underwater fences and the reflections of the bottom on the surface of the lake. And, of course, the situation when my engine broke down and so under the midday sun I had to row across almost the whole of the lake. Luckily I had access to an abundance of drinking water”, says Marinko, who due to the special measures of the protection of the lake, only had three

days for taking photographs.

In spite of the short timeframe, he noted almost all the plant and animal species that live in the lake and captured several beautiful landscape photographs on both sides of the water’s surface. Due to its isolation, a relatively small number of animal species live in the lake.

Vrana Lake is the only source of potable water for the entire Cres-Lošinj archipelago. The lake is under strict protection, the keeping and watering livestock, the use of artificial fertiliser in farming, the logging of the forest, camping and fishing are all forbidden. For the needs of pumping water and for the purpose of scientific research at the lake, only electric vessels are allowed to be used.

The lake is the largest crypto-depression in Croatia, its surface is 13.13 metres above sea level, whilst the bottom of the lake is 61.3 metres below sea level.

Underwater fences

In some parts of the lake, we can come across an unusual underwater scene – underwater fences which stretch down 5 metres. Since the level of the lake fluctuates up to 7 metres, the owners of plots of land on the shoreline used the lowest water level to fence off their land.





On the surface of the lake – a chaste tree

The legend of the lake

According to legend, Vrana Lake was once a large field where two sisters lived. The rich, evil sister lived in a luxurious castle, and nearby, in a modest little house lived her poor sister. In order to feed her family, she worked in the castle of her rich sister. There she kneaded bread in an apron made of goat's skin, and from the pieces which became stuck to the apron, she would make a little bread for her family. One day a pauper knocked on the door and asked for a piece of bread. From that small loaf of bread, she gave him a piece. At that moment the bread turned into a large white cake, and the water in the barrel became the best wine. The pauper told her to leave the valley with her children immediately because the evil sister would be punished. God's wrath, an earthquake and deluge would fall upon her. Her castle was destroyed and submerged. The remains of the castle according to the story can still be seen deep at the bottom of the lake and sometimes, during a storm, the tolling of bells can be heard from the watery depths. Even today fishermen snag their nets on the roofs of the sunken castle.



A shoal of rudd, a fish of the carp family



A forest of reeds



The chub has a lifespan of up to 15 years and can grow up to 60 cm long

report | stari laz  45° 21' 39.73" N, 14° 52' 40.13" E

ŽELJKO STIPEČ, POSTMAN AND PHOTOGRAPHER



The bear and wolf “whisperer”

Bears are aware of their strength
and they are not afraid of man, but
they do not really crave contact





Željko Stipeč: The animals accept me as a part of nature


Apart from snakes, I don't have any kind of fear of other animals and I think that it is, with patience, a recipe for success in the photographing of animals. They react aggressively to fear as soon as they feel and smell fear or when they feel threatened

How much dedication to something that is loved can deliver beautiful results and a hobby turn into something more, even a way of life, is best witnessed by the story of Željko Stipeč, an employee of Croatian Post who along with his work is increasingly becoming known as an excellent photographer. His

exceptional photographs of highland wildlife and landscapes have already been published in numerous books, magazines and newspapers, and because of the quality of his brilliant photographs, he is a sought after collaborator for any editor.

"Apart from snakes, I don't have any kind of fear of other animals and

I think that it is, with patience, a recipe for success in the photographing of animals. From many years of experience it is clear to me that, apart from when they feel threatened, animals react aggressively as soon as they sense and smell fear. If there is no fear, they first observe what is happening, and if you are patient



Wolf - the magnificent wild animal of Gorski Kotar

enough, calm and don't approach them too quickly, they get used to you. By respecting their rules, I have taken a series of photographs of bears and wolves from very close up. Moreover, I have even "spoken" with bears and offered them food, whilst I have photographed wolves from just a few metres away. If we are not a threat to them, animals accept us as a part of nature."

With bears, says Željko, it is even easier to establish contact:

"Bears are aware of their strength and they are basically not afraid of man, but they do not really crave contact. I remember a female bear who from the first moment I



looked at her was aggressive, she turned towards me and growled, and it was only when I saw two little bears that I realised why she was aggressive. However, she got used to me and after several days without problems she "posed" with her cubs. Likewise, I recently took some excellent photographs with two adult bears who I had followed for three years, from the time when they were cubs so they were so used to me that they recognised me by my smell and voice. This is why I managed to get within a metre or two of them and even feed and film them."

To the question of how he manages to work and take some many photographs Željko replied that everything is possible if there is a will and desire:

"In the morning I am at work for Croatian Post, and in the afternoons

and weekends I go to the forest with my camera. On average I spend 2-3 hours in the forest, and 7-8 hours at the weekend. Before I used to stay two-three days in the forest. A tent and a little food. I only take photographs in Gorski Kotar... I like to take photographs in all seasons and at every time of the day, however, my favourite time is spring when Gorski Kotar looks like a real paradise and when nature wakes up in it with a primeval strength. Along with spring I really like to take photographs in winter because at that time the photographs are special. Apart from wolves and bears, I like to photograph what is the most difficult to capture in the camera lens – lynx and deer. Fortunately, my persistence has rewarded me with encounters with these wonderful animals."

Birds much less

Apart from the wolf and bear, I like to photograph what is most difficult to capture in the lens – the lynx and deer. Fortunately, my persistence has rewarded me with encounters with these wonderful animals and here I have succeeded to photograph many beautiful moments. I photograph birds much less, and it is worrying that there were fewer birds last winter, and this year, after this crazy icy storm, there are even fewer, and I am afraid that the last two extremely severe winters have caused great damage to many animal species, Stipeč thinks.

landscapes | lopar's paradise beach  44° 49' 28.84" N, 14° 44' 29.5" E

LOPAR'S PARADISE BEACH

An aerial photograph of Lopar's Paradise Beach. The beach is a long, curved strip of golden sand, crowded with people and umbrellas. To the left, a small town with red-roofed buildings is nestled against a forested hill. The water is a vibrant turquoise near the shore, transitioning to a deeper blue further out. Numerous small boats are scattered across the water. In the distance, several islands and peninsulas are visible under a clear sky.

**A municipality
of 1,200 inhabitants
and 22 sandy beaches**

Lopar is recognised as a destination for family tourism, nobody enjoys the fine sand and the endless shallow sea, where they can walk tens of metres with water up to their knees more than children

The Croatian side of the Adriatic Sea is famous for all sorts of beauty apart from perhaps the large number of fine sandy beaches. There is however one exception, Lopar on the island of Rab, a municipality with 1,200 inhabitants where one can find as many as 22 sandy beaches. Due to this Lopar is recognised as a destination for family tourism, because nobody enjoys the fine sand and an endless shallow sea, where they can walk tens of metres with water up to their knees more than children.

The most famous beach in Lopar and one of the most famous beaches in Croatia is Paradise Beach (Rajska plaža), a sandy oasis almost two kilometres long around which the majority of the town's accommodation is located, a dozen catering outlets and all the necessary facilities that such a beach should have. Whoever has visited Lopar will also remember the beaches Mel and Livačina, situated right alongside Paradise Beach.

"The greatest quality of our beaches is that they are safe, which is also reflected in the structure of our guests where parents with children prevail. Mums and dads can freely sit their children in the shallows and enjoy the sea in peace because the beaches are shallow and nothing can happen to them. We have adapted a large part of what we offer with this in mind, so we have a children's playroom, beach games and children's entertainment, whilst these three beaches can be reached practically by car to the sea", they say at the



Sand sculpture festival

tourist board of Lopar municipality.

These beaches and offer will not surprise those less informed about Lopar so much because more or less everyone knows about them well. However, few people are familiar with Lopar's beaches on the other side of the town, facing the northeast, north and northwest side. Ciganka, Sahara, Dubac, Sturič, Stolac... are just a few of them, these sandy beaches of beautiful shapes are especially impressive when viewed from the air. Down on the ground you can

see untouched nature and experience the peace the kind of which is uncommon on such large beaches. Access to these Lopar beaches is not easy, so there are never many swimmers there, which makes them ideal destinations for a break.

The sand and the beaches are constantly being branded in Lopar. On the main beaches events are organised such as sand sculpture competitions, the Ultimate Frisbee Tournament and a samba festival, and they have a dozen beach volleyball courts.



Orthophoto image of Lopar's beaches

BAKAR'S TERRACES

The terraced phenomenon with vineyards once again

provides famous sparkling wine



A unique position - the slopes below Praputnjak, located at the foot of the Carolina Road, are the original location of Bakarska Vodica

The restoration of the terraces began about twenty years ago when the Dolčina Agricultural Cooperative was established and the first vines were planted

Hectares of vines once adorned the slopes below Praputnjak, located at the foot of the Carolina Road from where there is a unique view of Bakar Bay. The steep terraces bounded by drystone walls, the famous Bakar walls, were a true phenomenon where the most famous Croatian sparkling wine, Bakarska Vodica was produced. Most of the vineyards on these walls, developed in the second half of the 18th century, were owned by the people

of Praputnjak, whilst a smaller part was owned by the neighbours from Krasica and Bakarac. History says that the "blessing" for the appearance of the stonewalls was given by Empress Maria Theresa who, whilst travelling by boat through Bakar Bay, caught sight of people working on the steep slopes and became interested in what they were doing.

"They say that Maria Theresa gave an incentive to clear the forest and make arable land for the plant-



In 1972 Bakar's walls became the first protected cultural landscape in Croatia

ing of vines, and the serfs became the owners of the land and for five years they were free of all duties. Allegedly Napoleon's soldiers whose officers had their headquarters at Praputnjak in today's parochial house brought the recipe for sparkling wine", says Ivona Miloš whose project deals with the preservation of the cultural heritage in this region.

An indigenous wine sort – belina – was planted on the walls, from which Bakarska Vodica was



The revitalisation of the whole region also includes the restoration of the drystone walls

produced which at the time was even valued in the European courts, particularly in Vienna and England. The women of Praputnjak had the most important role in the maintenance and creation of the vines because their husbands in the 19th century often left their homes, living in overseas countries as labourers or seamen on sailing ships. Bakar's walls were alive and vines were planted on them until the start of the Second World War, but after the war, the walls and vineyards were abandoned mostly due to legal rules and regulations, as well as the development of industry and the change in the way of life.

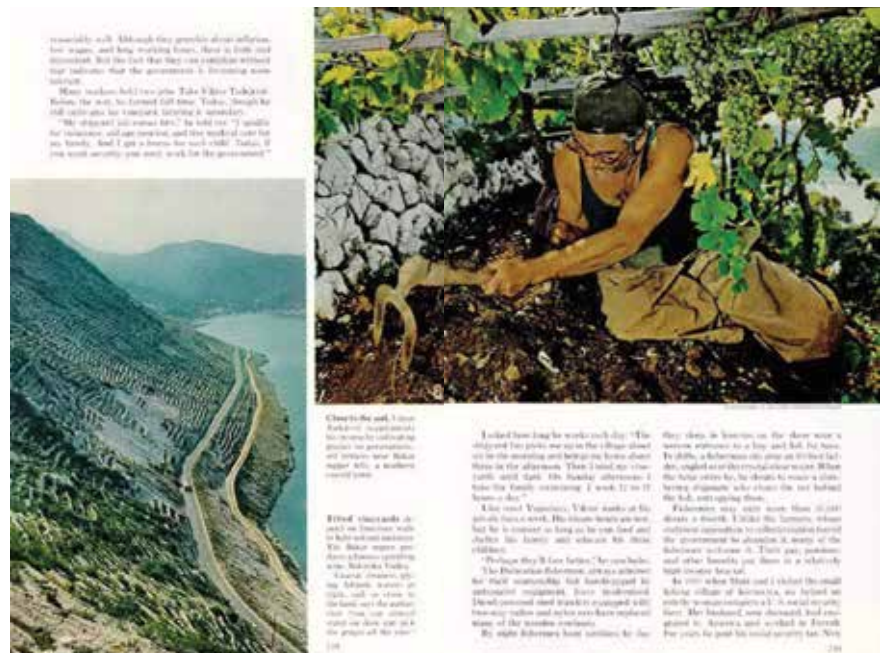
Old Bakarska Vodka was made exclusively from the belina sort harvested on the phenomenon of the Bakar walls. Bakarska Vodka used to be produced in every house in Praputnjak and drunk most during the holidays or at some special celebration. As a consequence of the neglect and natural adversities, the drystone walls collapsed and slowly disappeared, overgrown with weeds, and the vines fell into ruin.

The restoration of Bakar's walls, which in 1972 became the first protected cultural landscape in Croatia, began about twenty years ago. The official start of the works began in 2002 when the Dolčina Agricultural Cooperative was founded.

"Considering how much effort was necessary to build these walls, we must protect them – we owe so much to our ancestors."

The takala walls in National Geographic

Bakar's walls have often caught the attention of the media. A journalist of the prestigious magazine National Geographic sailed into Bakar Bay, and Viktor Tadejević who was one of the last people in the 20th century who was working on the takala walls caught his eye. The text was published on 2nd February 1962.



Part of the takala walls which has been restored is especially interesting and especially protected because it is the steepest - Ivona Miloš



To date, somewhat less than two hectares of the vineyards have been restored, but once on the walls, forty or so hectares were planted...

THE LIBURNIAN KARST

Between the Croatian Littoral, Istria and Slovenia

The Liburnian karst, the Matulji region which along with Lipa consists of Šapjane, Pasjak, Rupa and Brdce, is tucked in between the sea and the mountains, and doesn't belong to any one area, but has always fostered and guarded its own distinctiveness. They are not part of the Kvarner Littoral either, nor the Slovenian hilly regions, but since the 13th century BC they have built their home on the border

Everything was burnt. The whole village – the houses, belongings, tools and inhabitants, 269 of them were found in Lipa at that awful time on 30th May 1944, when the Nazis entered the small place in the Matulji hinterland and carried out one of the most horrific massacres of the Second World War. In just one morning entire generations of the residents of Lipa were wiped out, leaving a deep wound in the



Even after 20 centuries
the road passes the same
route

"The oldest finds indicate that life in this area developed in the 13th century BCE, and the objects found in caves testify to this. The Aquileia Road which connected Aquileia to Trieste was built in the first century and it passed through the Liburnian karst area and continued further on towards Rijeka. Since then, the road has been one of the main features of this region, and it passes down almost the same route to this day", explains Vana.

The route down which once Roman soldiers marched and important shipments pass today – through Pasjak or Rupa as the most important Croatian border crossings – is passed by local skiers in one direction and foreign tourists in the other. The local people had little use of the road itself, but the fact that it existed significantly influenced their life – this important crossroads from which routes towards Italy and Austria branched off since the time it was built had a strategic significance. This is why the inhabitants of this region, always remaining on their homeland, caring for their livestock and cultivating their modest crops in their sink-holes – a natural phenomenon of karst regions located in valleys amongst the hills – often changed the states in which they lived: from Rome, Byzantium and the Franks, via Venice and Austro-Hungary, with a short rule by Napoleon, to Italy, Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia...

"What was life like in the past?

It was certainly demanding, survival boiled down to looking after livestock, the cultivation of modest farmland and in some parts the timber trade. A quite strict division of work prevailed – the men made everything, they even weaved little baskets, although it was a shame for them to carry anything because that was a woman's job", says Vana, presenting the rich collection of



The region of the northern part
of the municipality of Matulji,
between little valleys and hills

has always fostered and guarded its own distinctiveness. They are not part of the Kvarner Littoral either, nor the Slovenian hilly regions, but since the 13th century BC they have built their home on the border.

"Lipa is, along with France's Oradour-sur-Glane and the Czech Republic's Lidice, one of three villages which were completely destroyed in the Second World War. After the war, the people of Lipa were offered the choice that their village was conserved as a war memorial and that a new settlement would be built a few kilometres away, as was the chance for the people of Oradour-sur-Glane and Lidice. However, the inhabitants of Lipa rejected the choice, they said that they wanted to return to their homes and so life survived there where it had always been", says Vana Gović curator of the Memorial Centre - Lipa Remembers, a unique and restored building, with the aim to not only preserve the memory of the horrific crime but also to the spark of life which has never been put out. In fact, this is why this museum is not focused solely on the tragedy, but on the whole life, culture and heritage of the Liburnian karst – a region which along with Lipa, consists of Šapjane, Pasjak, Rupa and Brdce.

collective memory, which is still fresh today almost 75 years later.

However, this is not a story about death, but – about life, which despite the adversities and difficult conditions has bravely and persistently been renewing itself for almost three and a half millennia on the Liburnian karst, a stark but beautiful region tucked in between the sea and the mountains that doesn't belong to any one area, but

ethnographic items located in the basement of the museum.

The Memorial Centre - Lipa Remembers is itself an exhibit because it is the largest and most significant building in the village – after the war, it was the first to be reconstructed, so that it could accommodate 10 - 12 families whilst their houses were being rebuilt. Before that it was a school for many years - the only school in the Croatian language in these areas - founded thanks to a donation by Ivan Kalčić Barela from 1885, a man from Lipa who after his medical studies worked in the Hungarian court, and who purchased and equipped the building and also established a fund which educated generations of people from Lipa. Whilst its existence as a building began way back in 1756 – as a post office, which also testifies to the importance of Lipa as a highway “station.” Namely, Pula only gained a post office thirty years later.

The Roman road stop is now a petrol station

The road is the main determinant of the Liburnian karst – a black and silver “fracture” in the lush greenery that meanders through the little valleys and hills, rising and falling in twisting spirals through the mostly uninhabited area, connecting

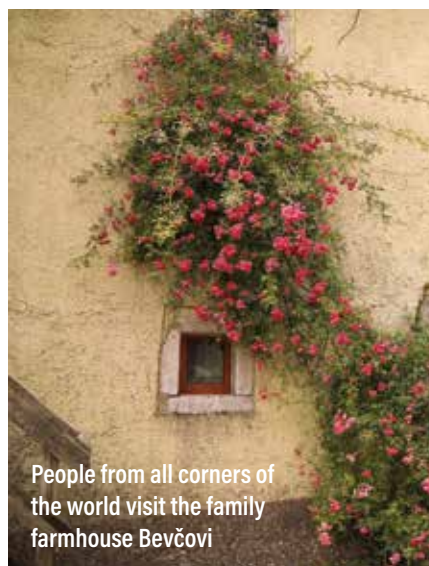
Today, after the difficult 20th century and numerous adversities, destruction and emigrations, life is slowly coming back to this region, and the local people are increasingly recognising the potential of the beauty which surrounds them and turning to tourism

rare “oases” of stone houses and fenced-off vegetable patches in the sea of untouched nature that mostly grows freely, covering the traces of past times and peoples – the walls of a Roman fort, Italian military bunkers – and creating space for new cycles of life that are sprouting from the foundations of those old ones. And so archaeological finds confirm that there was once a Roman road stop, a kind of service station in Rupa where travellers were offered rest, food and everything necessary for the safe continuation of their journey. Approximately in the same place, about 2,000 years later, now stands a petrol station

which, in somewhat more modern conditions – has the same purpose.

Life, which has never been particularly easy in this region, was especially worsened by the 20th century, bringing a series of adversities for the inhabitants. In the First World War, many inhabitants were mobilised into the Austrian army, they fought on the Russian Front or on the River Soča. After that, in 1919 the Italians arrived with D'Annunzio who tried to force the introduction of the Italian language.

Between the two wars, there was little work, so many people moved away. In the Second World War, the local people were mobilised into the Italian army, one part on the Russian Front and the other in Africa. Of those who went to Africa all of them came back, but of those who were in Russia, not one. They all died. After 1943 and the capitulation of Italy almost all the local people went into Partisan units, and in that time many houses in the villages were burnt down. Serious reconstruction followed, the people



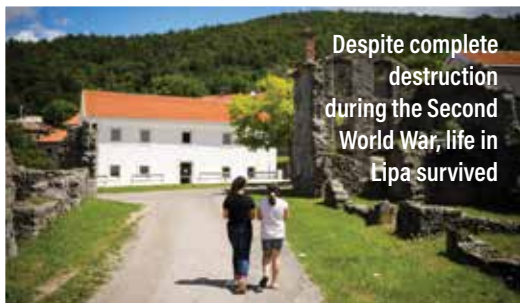
People from all corners of the world visit the family farmhouse Bevčovi



The Ivešić family: “If a great tourist story were made here, the whole area could live well from it”



Natural beauty and peace adorn this part of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County



Despite complete destruction during the Second World War, life in Lipa survived



An impressive display on the first floor of the Lipa Memorial Centre recalls the Lipa tragedy



A rich collection of ethnographic items is located in the basement of the museum in Lipa

slowly turned to industry and many were employed in Rijeka's shipyards, but they did not leave the country. However, it was not so simple back then – connections with Rijeka were poor, the bus routes were few and far between, and so there was a new wave of emigration. It was only in the 1970s that life became slightly easier – better transport connectivity, standards grew and so now this region is a very pleasant place to live. In Kras they have peace, silence, beautiful nature and clean air, as well as Rijeka and Opatija nearby.

After the war, for a time this region was part of Slovenia, and it was annexed to Croatia upon the insistence of the local people of the whole area. However, deep multi-layered relationships still connect this area to the Slovenes. A border can mark a region, but not the people, and many, many people of Rupa found better halves in the neighbouring country. Apart from this, few places on of the Liburnian karst have they own cemetery, and so the local people were generally buried in the region of Jelšane, which lead to the saying "a living Croat, a dead Slovene."

the road leads, has, for the last twenty or so years been the home to the Ivešić family who decided to create a tourist and hospitality story right here, and six years ago opened the Bevčovi family farmstead for tourists to where – with pride the father emphasises – people come from all over the world.

"When we started with this and when people started to come to us, others then began to think about tourism, and so now they are opening holiday homes, apartments and they are doing very well", says Marinko Ivešić sitting in the authentically arranged tavern whose walls are lined with stone, and decorated with the tools that the local people used to work with in their everyday life, whilst his wife Ljilja makes gnocchi, and his daughter

Mihaela serves an Italian family who are enjoying the local specialities and the pleasant ambience.

"We have had guests from all parts of Europe, and even from other parts of the world – Israel, the USA, Argentina and many others. And everyone is delighted – they have peace, a homely ambience, good food, a relaxed atmosphere, the children are not frightened, they can play because there is no traffic, look at the geese, and chickens.... If a great tourist story were made here, the whole area could live well from it."

The Liburnian karst

The Liburnian karst encompasses an area of about 4,200 hectares in which five places belong - Rupa, Pasjak, Brdce, Šapjane and Lipa – located at the crossroads of important transport routes. The region of Liburnian karst includes two border crossings – Pasjak and Rupa, connected by a motorway, as well as an international railway line with a station at Šapjane. The area which is located between 400 and 825 metres above sea level is characterised by numerous karst valleys formed on tectonically unsettled terrain, today enclosed by drystone walls and framed by wooded glades, and which is rich in speleological and archaeological sites that have been poorly investigated and are generally inaccessible.

Life is returning

Today, after the difficult 20th century and numerous adversities, destruction and emigrations, life is slowly coming back to this region, and the local people are increasingly recognising the potential of the beauty which surrounds them and turning to tourism. Brdce, the furthest place in the county and the "last stop" in Matulji to which

PLATAK, HILL OF ENJOYMENT

The number 1 national excursion site

The very achievable goal is to have the Platak Centre open 365 days a year and to enable different categories of guests and visitors to enjoy each day

The core of the Platak project is that an average ski resort with a view of the sea, becomes a location that will function the whole year round, emphasises Alen Udovič, the director of the Gorski Kotar Sports Centre in whose framework, along with the exceptional help of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, the realisation of this project which is

taking on an increasingly visible shape is being implemented:

"Platak is recognised as a place of great potentials, both due to its natural beauties and to its predispositions related to sports and tourist features, from skiing in the winter to various other activities in the summer. Moreover, based on the experiences of developed

European alpine and mountain destinations, we believe that the emphasis should be on the summer season. Namely, a large number of tourists stay in the region of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County who can be attracted to Platak, and in relation to winter, the advantages are that access to Platak is far easier, which could attract various categories of



A real joy for the children



The renovated restaurant and café of the Large Tourist House Platak



The next most important step forward is to create a system for making snow – the Radeševo chairlift



Alen Udovič: The summer season can still be more successful

guests and not only fans of winter sports. Our goal is very achievable, therefore, to have the Platak Centre open 365 days a year and to enable different categories of guests and visitors to enjoy each of those days.

In order to do this, we have ensured that on Platak every day someone takes care of the guests, we have designed and created a

number of new features, and this is just the basis for the future. The next most important step forward is to create a system for making snow.

Platak will be a hill for enjoyment and as such will function all 365 days in the year. It could become, if it isn't already, the number 1 national excursion site", believes director Udovič.

Of course, none of this came about without the quality work which was preceded by significant investment. Amongst other things invested in were two tubing trails which are amongst the longest in Europe, three children's playgrounds were built, and a large court where basketball, handball, badminton, five-a-side football and cage ball can be played has also been set up next to the car park. A go-cart track was made with ten new carts, ten barbecue spots and ten picnic areas have been set up which were arranged by staff

of the Gorski Kotar Sports Centre themselves, a disc golf course was made as well as a court for beach volleyball, two children's didactic parks have been set up, whilst safety platforms have been installed on the chairlifts and add-ons have been fitted which enable the transport of bicycles to the top of Radeševo.

Platak also offers facilities in the nearby surroundings and this is thanks to the organised cycling and hiking trails. For cycling fans also on offer is the possibility of renting the thirty bikes on offer, as well as two quality trim trails with a series of exercise equipment and an educational trail. The fact that the owners of nearby holiday houses were selling their properties for a pittance several years ago but now no longer want to sell under any price tag confirms that Platak is becoming an increasingly interesting location.

THE LAKE NEXT TO NJIVICE



Jezero lake located between Omišalj and Njivice offers a mosaic of scientific knowledge about the lives and movements of birds

The precious reserve on the island of Krk

The lake next to Njivice on the island of Krk represents a unique oasis of wetland and aquatic vegetation in the wider Kvarner region which is also of great importance for the survival of individual animal species connected to such rare, in our region, habitats

Jezero ("lake") next to Njivice is for many reasons an exceptional natural pearl of the island of Krk as well as Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. Until recently it was used as a source of water, it is a region

which has been under a strict water protection regime for a number of years and this is one of the reasons why its natural values and living world have remained excellently preserved to this day. Jezero lake

represents a unique oasis of wetland and aquatic vegetation in the wider Kvarner region which is also of great importance for the survival of individual animal species connected to such, rare in our region, habitats.

"By the richness and diversity of the birds, Jezero lake is the richest ornithological location of the Northern Adriatic region and is also known as a nesting ground on our islands for several species of extremely rare wetland birds", reveals Andrej Radalj, a collaborator at the Institute of Ornithology.

"On the lake and around it, besides the exceptional number of birds, we also come across endangered reptiles and amphibians – European pond turtles, dice snakes, tree frogs, toads, etc. Also in the lake live carp, pike, frogs, tench, eels and mosquitofish and in order to reduce the spread of macro-vegetation silver carp were also introduced there in the 1970s", Andrej emphasises. The region of Jezero lake, especially its floodplain which includes Mali Lug, is rich with wetland vegetation and in that area also live five species of snakes.

However, what makes this region extremely valuable and interesting is its flying inhabitants, both permanent and temporary. Namely, it is right here, both in the spring and in autumn migration periods, it is used by an exceptionally large number of birds, particularly common cranes, herons, ibises and other species connected to wetland habitats.

"Jezero is visited by thousands of different birds. It is interesting how here we, in quite a few cases, used to come across specimens which have been ringed in the region of Northern Europe and Scandinavia just as swallows marked at this location on Krk were soon found in central and southern parts of the African continent. We have also recorded cases that have confirmed to us that swallows spend the night on Krk during the day often "jump" to Slovenian towns from where they, after a long day of "fun" followed by feeding, return here towards the evening to sleep", Andrej Radalj reveals to us about one of the interesting facts of Jezero lake.

The ringing station at Jezero lake is also well-known as an important scientific point of Croatian ornithology, a place where important and valuable scientific projects are already being implemented as well as a location where all bird lovers can, in the company of experts, get to know the natural wealth of Jezero, the island of Krk and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.



A bird caught in the net will be one of the ten thousand birds which are ringed at the Jezero Ornithological Station on the island of Krk



On the lake and around it, besides the exceptional number of birds, we also come across endangered reptiles and amphibians – European pond turtles, dice snakes, tree frogs, toads, etc.



Andrej Radalj, bird ringer and president of the Jezero Association



The wetland part of Jezero lake

TABITHA BURRILL, DRIVENIK

Living and working in Drivenik is much nicer than in London

Tabitha Burrill moved from London to Drivenik, from where she trades with the world in the glass business

Life in Drivenik is a beautiful life. Everything is near us. I close my office and in five minutes I am on the beach. Where can I get to in five minutes after I close my office in London?

Tabitha Burrill who moved from London with her family is sure that money is not everything in life. And she probably said to herself many times "Money can't buy this."

"Life in Drivenik in Vinodol municipality is a beautiful life. Everything is near us. I close my office and in five minutes I am on the beach. Where can I get to in five minutes after I close my office in London? People in London travel for two hours to work and another two hours from work. Do you know how much of life is lost travelling to and from work? An enormous amount of money is lost on transport.

Pointless. It is wonderful in Bribir or Drivenik that I can park without problems at any time. Do you know how much that means and do you know how many places there are in the world where parking is an impossible mission? We are enjoying Croatia. We go

to the theatre, everything is close, we go to the mountains, we go to see the bears, we go off to Italy. A completely different life to the one we had in London. The weather is beautiful, the people wonderful, there are many positive things around us", says the English woman who is aware that there must also be some money in the whole story.

She has a business in glass. With a special technique, she breaks glass in her Glass Studio in Drivenik and creates a tiny, unique, colourful myriads of diverse pieces of glass which she exports around the world. From the pieces of glass from Drivenik, artists around the world decorate their products. If it is not clear to you what Tabitha does, don't worry. It isn't clear to the people of Drivenik either.

However, regardless of the

amazement of the local population, Tabitha's market is the whole world.

"Yes, we work with the whole world. Half of our market is in Great Britain, and we are increasingly present in America and Australia", says the English woman with a Bribir address.

Thanks to the Glass Emporium Studio and its 17 employees, the future of the post office in Drivenik is secure. The packages travel all around the world. About 80 packages from the little post office at the foot of the Frankopan tower spread around the world.

Also working in the Glass Studio is an English woman who fell in love with a Croat, a Croatian woman who fell in love with an Englishman and brought him to Drivenik and an art teacher from Rijeka who found a job after talking to Tabitha on the beach. And why did the workers from London also move to Drivenik? It became unbearable in London, the tempo is such that it forces you to work 24 hours a day, seven days week. For what?

Business in Croatia is not only more relaxed but also cheaper.

"Expenses in England are much higher, renting an office more expensive, the materials more expensive, these are all the advantages of life and business in Bribir"



Tabitha's workers moved from London to Drivenik, in England it became unbearable

IVO VIDOTTO, BLOOD DONOR

Donating blood saves lives



With his 164 blood donations, Ivo is amongst the record holders in the whole region

People are often unaware of the importance of giving blood, how much giving just once a year, which only takes half an hour, can be important for saving lives

Humanity is his greatest virtue, and saving people's lives the reward for all the effort. Rijeka journalist Ivo Vidotto one of the most active blood donors in the county has already passed the figure of 160 donations. Indeed the right person to be at the head of the Council of Voluntary Blood Donors in Rijeka, and at the same time the president of the National Committee of Blood Donors at the Croatian Red Cross.

"People are often unaware of the importance of giving blood, how much giving just once a year, which only takes half an hour, can be important for saving lives. I would invite everyone to visit the department of paediatric oncology or haematology at Kantrida. Not one of those children there would survive if there were no voluntary blood donors. The children being treated there must get various blood components after every chemo-

therapy in order to regenerate their blood. Because chemotherapy destroys bad cells, as well as the good ones", explains Ivo and adds: "It is not only people who have had an operation or been in an accident that depend on donors, but there are also people who are surviving thanks to transfusion therapies. They are haematology and oncology patients who have to constantly receive blood because they would not be able to live without it."

Ivo Vidotto first gave blood when he was 18 years old. He says that he had no kind of role model, not in his family or amongst his friends, but that he simply set it as a personal goal.

"I felt it within myself and went to give a blood transfusion, and I will never forget that first time, how they accepted me at the Red Cross. They told me how much donors are valued and how it was

greatly needed and important. So I continued like that after three months, then again and again. My brother followed my example who also became a donor as soon as he turned 18, and so far he has donated blood 165 times! I am glad that my daughter Vanna and niece Monika, as well as our sons-in-law who took the decision by themselves, have also taken this route, although I had never forced them to do it."



We are trying to prick the consciousness of citizens because currently only 5-6% of those who can give blood actually do - Ivo Vidotto

SVEN MARIČIĆ, SCIENTIST

The future will be very exciting

We have long since positioned our country in the elite club of countries which can apply 3D technology to the most demanding fields of science such as biomedicine

Sven Maričić: Today the process of design and production is almost unimaginable without 3D technology



In the last few years amongst the most recognisable names linked to science in Croatia, and beyond, is, without doubt, Doctor Sven Maričić PhD, a young Rijeka scientist who in Croatia is rightfully considered as a pioneer of 3D printing technology, especially in biomedicine. Doctor Sven Maričić PhD at the Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka leads the Centre for Biomodelling and Innovation in medicine, and at the Juraj Dobrila University in Pula he is an assistant to the rector for new technologies. With his everyday work with students, as well as numerous research activities, Sven represents an example of an intellectual and scientist who makes a great contribution to the development of the area where he lives, often much more than that too.

He has received many acknowledgements for his work, amongst which the most significant is the State Science Award. He was also a member of the MIT jury which judged European innovators up to the age of 35, and he also sees this as a great success because he gained an insight into

the best of the best in the whole of Europe: "I am also happy because the student start-ups which I mentored were also awarded. A professor cannot grow if his students do not grow with him", says Sven.

Doctor Sven Maričić PhD explains the significance of 3D technology which has found an application in almost all sectors, from the automobile industry,



Excellent applications are expected from artificial intelligence and robotics in the future

manufacturing, the pharmaceutical industry, biomedicine to space technologies. And he states:

"3D printing is a wonder. A real wonder, I'm telling you! After so many years spent in this field, sometimes I catch myself looking at the creation of a new model with the same zeal as when I made the first steps in 2007. Almost everything you can imagine can be made. Imagine if they could wake someone up who lived in the 19th century. And when they tried to explain the rapid technological advance and the environment, they would probably look at us in disbelief.

Today even parts of rockets and aeroplanes can be 3D printed. Today in just a few minutes you can send your projected 3D model to the other side of the world and there it can be made to the same dimensions as though in the same room that you are in. I am glad that we have long since positioned our country in the elite club of countries which can apply 3D technology to the most demanding fields of science such as biomedicine", says Doctor Maričić.

DANIJEL POPOVIĆ, DESIGNER

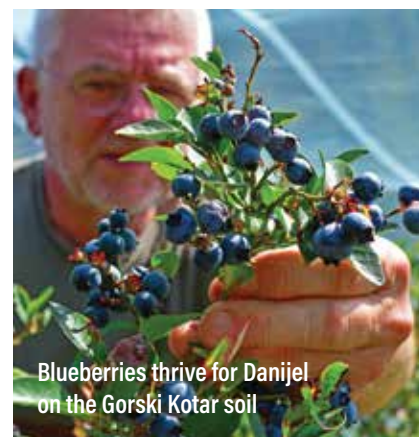
Designer's stories from Crni Lug



In front of his house in Crni Lug - Danijel Popović



In the dining room



Blueberries thrive for Danijel on the Gorski Kotar soil

Danijel Popović achieved a global reputation in the world of design with a series of excellent works the most famous of which is the red star of the beer Heineken

Danijel Popović, the reputable and internationally recognised Croatian designer, is, without doubt, the most famous retiree of Crni Lug in Gorski Kotar today. Danijel achieved global reputation in the world design with a series of excellent works the most famous of which are the red star of the beer Heineken, the brilliant postage stamp with a carved statue of Our Lady for which he won a prestigious world award, a wooden (Gorski Kotar wood) crown for Pope John Paul II upon his visit to Croatia, the successful tourist slogan "I feel Slovenia" which in another colour the words "I feel love" were incorporated... the list goes on.

This top designer and resident of Gorski Kotar charms everyone who gets to know him, both for his approachability and normality and also because of his honest and great love of his Gorski Kotar homeland. For the last ten years, Danijel has lived in Crni Lug, right from the time

he retired. However, those who know him were not at all surprised because he spent almost all of his working life in Zagreb, constantly "threatening" to escape back home to Crni Lug as soon he achieved the conditions for his pension.

"For me Zagreb was super, working for numerous daily and weekly papers as a graphics editor. But as soon as Friday came round, I began to get ready for Crni Lug, alone or with my family. And I didn't care about the weather. It used to snow so much that travelling was not recommended, and I used to sit on the train and get to Delnice and then, if there was no transport, I would walk those 15 kilometres home. Everyone whom I worked with in Zagreb knew that I would be grumpy on Monday if I hadn't been to Crni Lug. For me, Crni Lug and Gorski Kotar are in my blood, and of course, I was constantly yearning to return, and along with that the fact

that I recently built a nice house and developed a room rental business has drawn me back and so now I am enjoying that and my now wish is to further develop it in order that I pass that business to my son Goran who will live here with his family."

Danijel hasn't put his feet up yet, and so he still enjoys his retirement and work with the guests with whom he always finds time for a glass of honey brandy, beer or wine complemented with his designer works: "My son now runs the business, but I still end every evening working on some graphic or design project. Many people with whom I have worked still call me, which is really nice, and sometimes I answer their requests – I enjoy it! I do what I love and I do it in the most beautiful place in the world. Don't believe me? Well, come to Crni Lug and see for yourself! And we'll have a little honey brandy!" our host concluded.

KOŠLJUN

The monastery that delights tourists as well as the spiritually wounded

Košljun is a place that since its beginnings has lived with its surroundings, the closest being Punat and the island of Krk and its local people with whom throughout history they have shared both good and bad times

Forest vegetation reserve

The surface area of this unusual islet is all of 68,500 m² and since 1969 it has been protected as a special reserve of forest vegetation as well. There are about 400 species of plants on it.



The islet does not belong to the territory of Punat, however, it does represent its wealth



Between 30,000 and 35,000 visitors tour the monastery annually



Košljun's archaeological collection

Košljun – an islet on an island is, for many reasons, a special and different place. A small fleck of greenery located in the very centre of Puntarska Draga, a closed cove on the border of the municipality of Punat and the town of Krk, a place where today, as in previous centuries, many seek and most often find peace and tranquillity. It is an oasis of exceptional ambience and natural beauty, a wealth of spirituality which has been inseparably woven into the fabric of this picturesque islet, the home to a small community of Franciscans which has succeeded to spread the word

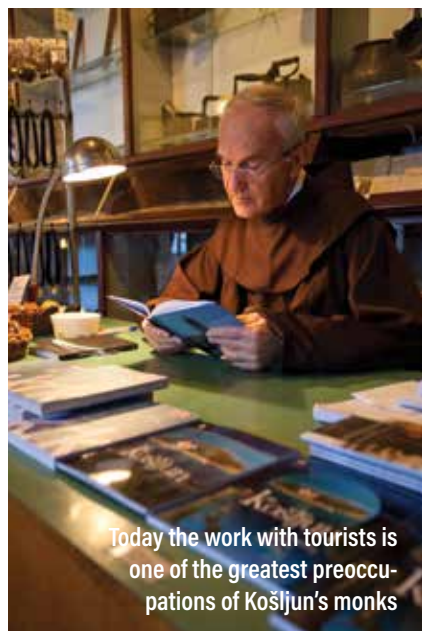
about Košljun as well as its “mother” island Krk around the globe.

Just as similar places, fairy tale Košljun also has legends about its origins, and so this piece of “Bodulija” (the local people’s name for the island of Krk) is known too many by the events which took place long ago, in a time when the whole of Puntarska Draga was a fertile field which was cultivated by two brothers, one of whom was blind. During the sharing of the harvest, the sighted brother deceived his the blind brother, says the local legend, provoking the wrath of God which resulted in the flooding of the whole unjustly divided field and the saving of the blind brother’s house which along with his small piece of surrounding land was the only one left above the water.

Moving away from the domain

of legends and entering the field of historical facts we will find out that Košljun was inhabited in Roman times when a fortified summer-house was built on it. From this, as historians say, the islet took its name: castellum – Košljun. It is also known that on this islet back in the 12th century there was the Glagolitic Benedictine Abbey of St Mary with a three-nave Romanesque church whose foundations are located underneath today’s monastery church.

In the 15th century the Benedictine monastery was empty and abandoned and upon the request of the owners of the island Martin and Ivan Frankopan, in 1447 Pope Nicholas V allowed the Franciscans monks who were already living in their present-day monastery in the town of Krk, to enter the abandoned and by then ruinous monastery complex. With the commitment of Ivan Frankopan and his daughter Maria Katarina, the Benedictine church was enlarged and restored and this was mainly made possible with the money which Katarina Frankopan left to the monastery community behind after her death in Venice. It was mentioned, as a

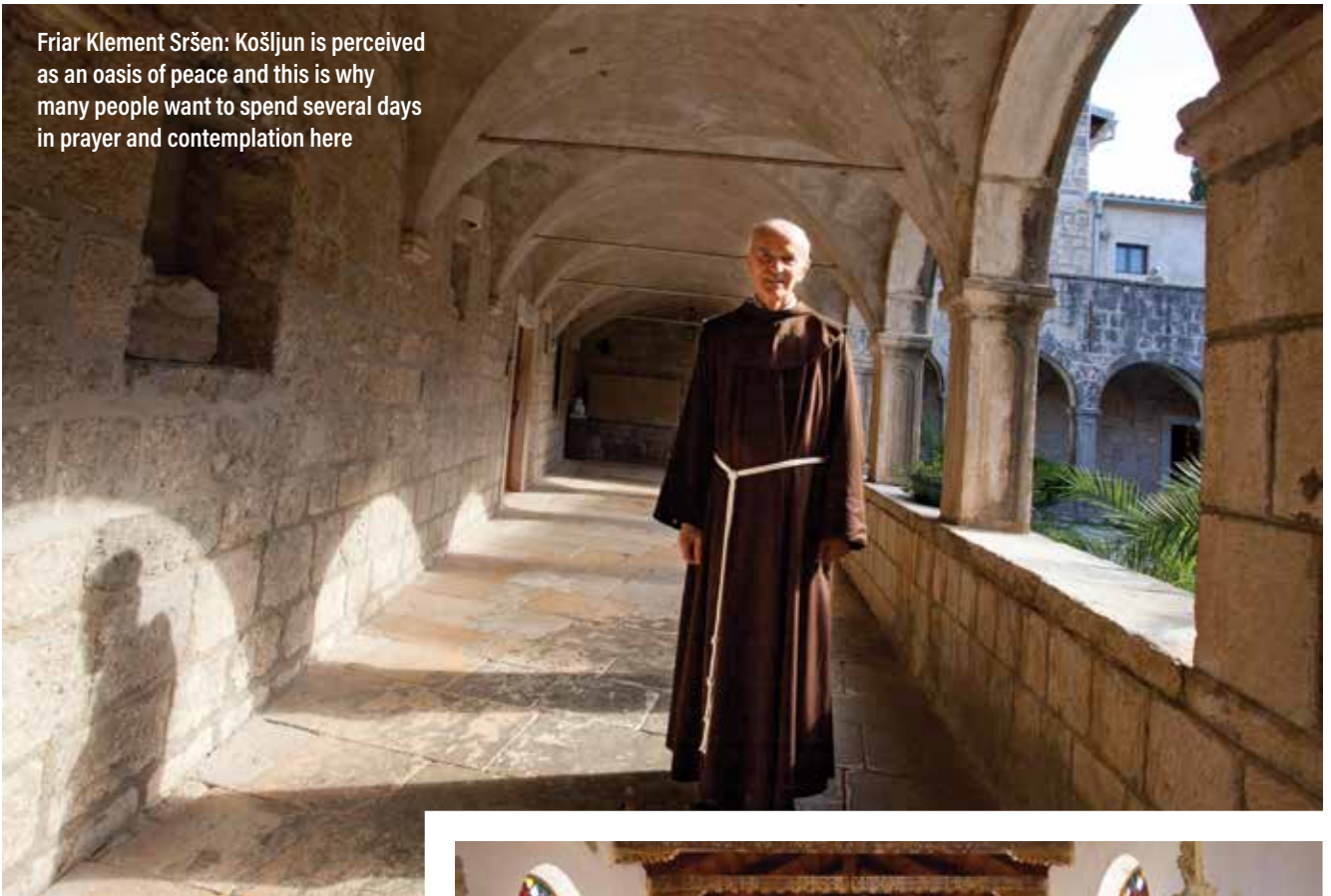


Today the work with tourists is one of the greatest preoccupations of Košljun's monks

The monastery’s library with a hundred incunabula

One of the greatest values stored on this island is hidden in the monastery’s library which is the oldest and largest on the island of Krk, with a collection of about 30,000 items, amongst which is also a collection of as many as one hundred incunabula. At the same time, it is also the largest such collection in these regions and the Franciscans are especially proud of it. Also particularly precious is the first Latin language edition of Ptolemy’s Atlas from 1511, which is one of only three preserved copies still in existence.

Friar Klement Sršen: Košljun is perceived as an oasis of peace and this is why many people want to spend several days in prayer and contemplation here



condition of the execution of her will, that she wanted to be buried on the monastic islet, and so her earthly remains are still preserved in a grave located at the very entrance of the monastery's church.

As Friar Klement Sršen, the guardian of the monks of the community which has only three members, by presenting the long, rich and interesting history of this sea-surrounded Franciscan monastery, passed on to us. Košljun is a place that since its beginnings has lived with its surroundings, the closest being Punat and the island of Krk and its local people with whom throughout history they have shared both good and bad times. This is certainly proved best by the various historical artefacts which fill the museum's collection, which, along with its natural features, in times of mass tourist movements make it one of the most common reasons for people to visit this islet.

"It would be difficult to count everything that our monastery pre-



The polyptych on the main altar was made by the famous Girolamo da Santacroce in 1535

serves and what it presents today to its visitors who day after day, year after year visit us in increasing numbers", emphasises Friar Klement Sršen the head of the monastery, adding that the work with tourists these days is one of the greatest preoccupations of the monks there:

"We are aware of the fact that our islet has long been an unmissable attraction which visitors to the island of Krk as well as the whole

of Kvarner want to visit and tour", highlights our guest, adding that between 30,000 and 35,000 people tour the monastery annually.

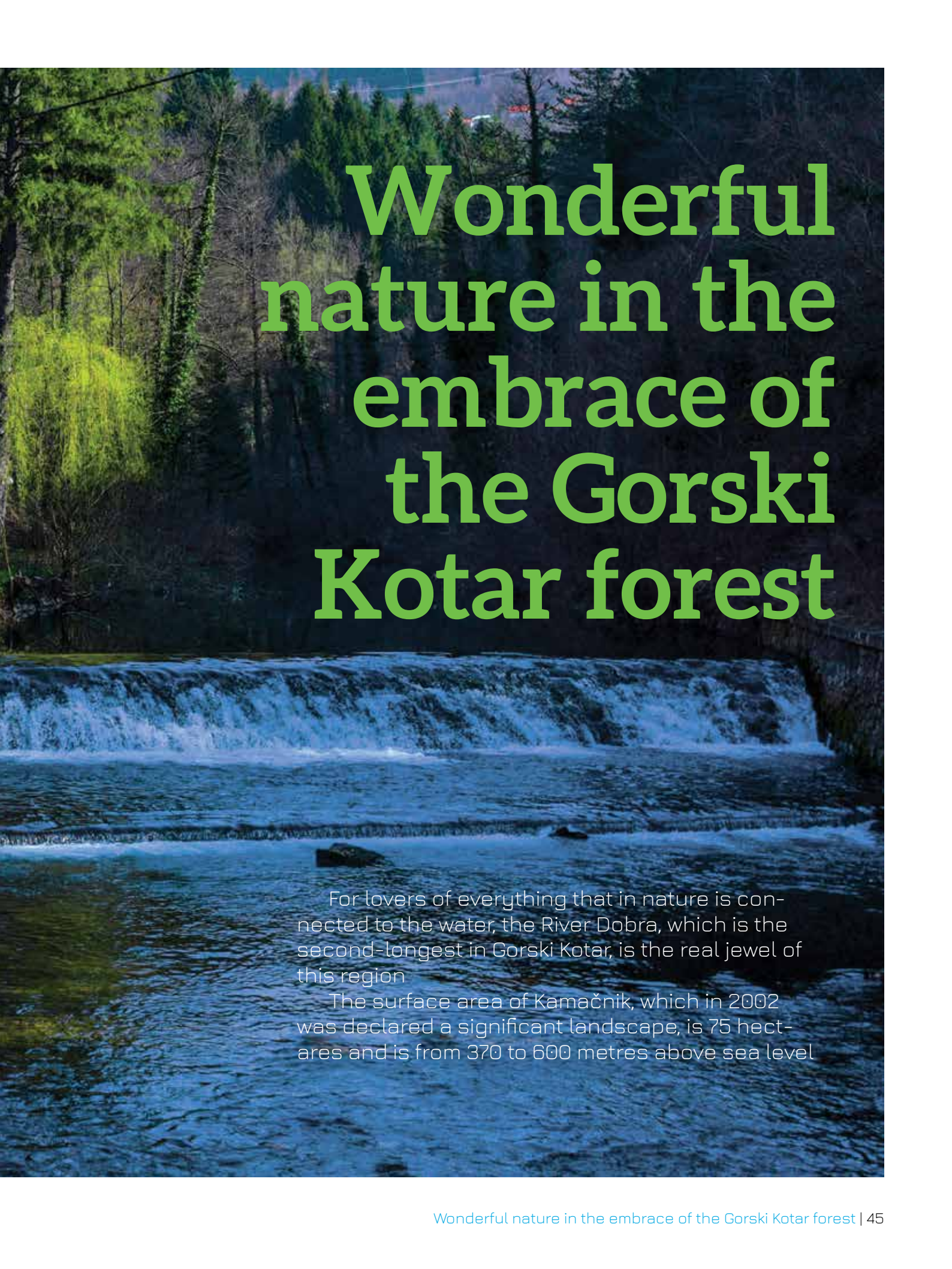
Along with all of this, the Franciscans of Košljun are not losing or neglecting the spiritual and religious aspect of their activities. Since Košljun is perceived as an oasis of peace, it is no surprise that many people want to spend several days in prayer and contemplation here.

postcards | gomirje $\text{45}^{\circ} 20' 10.28'' \text{ N}, 15^{\circ} 7' 13.86'' \text{ E}$

THE RIVER DOBRA, KAMAČNIK AND GOMIRJE



The River Dobra is the second-longest
Gorski Kotar river - the Dobra at Vrbovsko



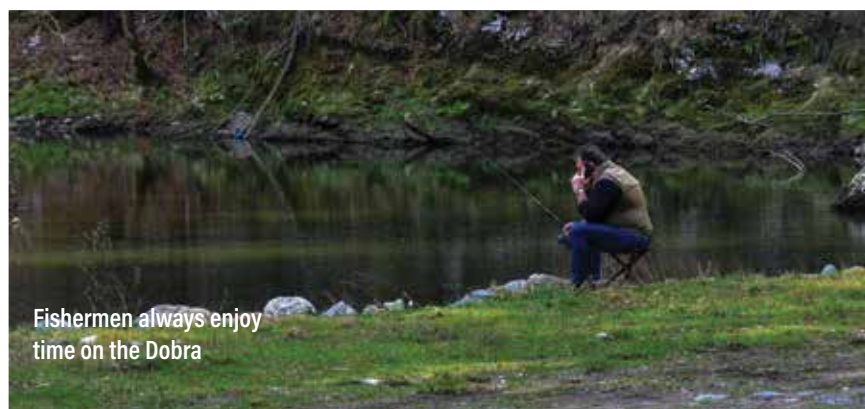
Wonderful nature in the embrace of the Gorski Kotar forest

For lovers of everything that in nature is connected to the water, the River Dobra, which is the second-longest in Gorski Kotar, is the real jewel of this region

The surface area of Kamačnik, which in 2002 was declared a significant landscape, is 75 hectares and is from 370 to 600 metres above sea level



The best way to get to know Kamačnik canyon is to walk along the three-kilometre path



Fishermen always enjoy time on the Dobra



Pan's Trail with its musical instruments is one attraction of Kamačnik

This part of the town of Vrbovsko, from the River Dobra to the village of Gomirje is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful, and unfortunately also least known mountain areas of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. In this border area of Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Karlovac counties in the embrace of real dense mountain forests are located meadows, rivers, rivulets, streams, canyons and hilly peaks which are not too difficult to conquer.

For lovers of everything that in nature is connected to the water, the River Dobra is the real jewel of this region. The second-longest river of Gorski Kotar emerges not far from Skrad from two sources – one at the hamlet of Bukov Vrh, and the other near the village of Gornja Dobra. From the area of Skrad the River

Dobra flows the first kilometres towards Vrbovsko where a very interesting tributary called Kamačnik rises from the same-named canyon in a legally protected region which

captivates with its beauty and harmony, as well as its wild, primordial and often untouched nature, adds the river additional strength. Before it leaves the Vrbovsko area,

Kamačnik's water

What might surprise us on the way through Kamačnik the most is the special, greeny-blue colour of its clear water in the rapids and ponds of eroded hollows, totally different from the dark, somewhat muddy water of the River Dobra. The colour of the water of Kamačnik changes depending on the depth of the river bed cut into the rocks, the season and time of day, the conditions of the shadows or illumination of the rays of the sun, the types of vegetation (algae or moss) that grows at the bottom of the river, and a number of other factors. During the time of turgid water, Kamačnik also takes on more distinct milky-white shades of a foamy torrent that swirls around in eddying pools and jumps over the rocky canyon," said Sonja Šišić.

which also means Gorski Kotar, and for a moment disappears into the fairy tale Đula's abyss in Ogulin, the River Dobra will offer everyone who loves nature in the Gorski Kotar region the conditions for an ideal break, walking and fishing, and even swimming during the summer too.

Along its 107.9-kilometre length, this clean and beautiful river is not good for canoeing or rafting but is ideal for fishing, which is already well known by many fishing fans.

Although the Dobra offers many reasons to enjoy yourself, it can hardly be measured with the beauty, wildness and specificity of Kamačnik which is legally protected as a designated significant landscape. Kamačnik is located alongside the Dobra itself, somewhere in the middle of its way from Skrad towards Gomirje and the border with Karlovac County. It is, in fact, the canyon of the eponymous river, a tributary of the Dobra, which rises approximately three kilometres from the restaurant at the point where the Kamačnik flows into the Dobra.

The best way to get to know the Kamačnik canyon is to walk up its three-kilometre path which leads alongside and over the stream that is crossed by wooden bridges, to climb up alongside the hillside and down, accompanied by the enchanting gurgling of the water and mountain freshness to the small green valley where the source of Kamačnik stream is found.

In 2002, Kamačnik, which covers 74.44 hectares and ranges from 370 to 600 metres above sea level, was declared a significant landscape.

In order to introduce the beauty and specificities of this region to the greatest number of visitors as possible, in 2009 Croatian Forests opened an educational botanical trail along Kamačnik with a total of 19 educational boards from which visitors can learn about the diversity of the forest and the other vegetation, the flora and fauna and fungi of this significant landscape. Also



Interior of the Church of the Birth of St John the Baptist whose construction began in 1719



The restaurant at the very spot where the Kamačnik stream flows into the Dobra



Gomirje Monastery – the westernmost Orthodox monastery in Europe



The beautiful Čogrljevo lake in Moravice

added to this should be the new attraction which is called Pan's Trail, a collection of large-scale musical instruments made of wood which are located in the environment and allow visitors to "start playing" and fill the beauty of nature with their sounds. Beside each instrument, there is an educational board with explanations. The trail is named after Pan, in Greek mythology the god of shepherds, herds, fields, pastures and forests, in other words, the protector of hunters and nature as well as the lover of music and the best dancer amongst the gods.

Following Kamačnik downstream along the flow of the Dobra, we reach a quite large open area of water called Ribnjak, where on the right is an Orthodox monastery and on the left is the village of Gomirje. This Gorski Kotar settlement is mentioned for the first time in 1461 in preserved documents when it was owned by the Frankopan family. Since Turkish conquests had

destroyed it, at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries a Serb population, mostly from Dalmatia, was settled here with the aim of defending this region from further Turkish incursions. As early as 1599, or according to some documents 1600, the Monastery of St John the Baptist was established here which today is the westernmost Orthodox monastery in Europe.

MLADEN STOJIĆ, HERALDIST



Every historical coat of arms tells its own story

To date, we have made more than three hundred coats of arms, flags and flags of honour, says heraldist Mladen Stojić

At the time when the European continent was divided into numerous noble possessions and kingdoms who often fought amongst themselves, coats of arms were used as a kind of "personal card" via which the generally illiterate soldiers were able to distinguish friends from enemies. Today, however, they tell many stories about their owners who identified themselves through the features of lions, cranes,

eagles and various other symbols that decorated their coats of arms. Mladen Stojić who has been involved in the study of heraldry for two decades already and today is the most famous name in this field knows all of the secrets and stories which they tell because he has told many of them himself by creating a series of original coats of arms.

"Theory says that coats of arms began sometime during the Cru-

sades, when the Crusaders returned with painted shields, however, I believe that they were around before that. The knowledge of coats of arms was once a question of life and death, they had to be unique and visible from 200 metres, in order to know whether a friend or enemy was approaching", explains Mladen, as he sits in his office surrounded by hundreds of coats of arms, flags and seals which his company has created. However, the fact that his mobile phone did not stop ringing long enough for him to finish his sentence proved the fact that coats of arms not only

have historical value today but that it is still a matter of prestige to have your own symbol on a shield. Associations, towns, municipalities, counties, companies, pubs and citizens – everyone wants their own unique and original coat of arms.

"So far we have made more than three hundred coats of arms, flags and flags of honour which have been approved by the expert committee of the Ministry of Public Administration and have become official symbols of local and regional self-government units. We work for churches and museums, for example, the coats of arms for the Turopolje nobility for a permanent exhibition of the local museum there we have made more than 60 coats of arms in 15 years. We have also created coats of arms for the knightly societies such as the Brethren of the Croatian Dragon, and along with that, we also make family coats of arms, for which we also go into historical research, in order to find whether there already exists a historical coat of arms of a family, however, our basic work is heraldic design, in other words, the designing and drawing of new coats of arms", says Mladen.

Most local self-governmental units are identified by symbols which are created right here in his workshop, where Veronika Žuvić and Martin Stojić also work. It is easier to count which of the 36 Primorje-Gorski Kotar towns and municipalities they haven't produced coats of arms for. However, since some of the local communities have adapted already existing, historical coats of arms, many of them after their foundation in 1993, they have adopted completely new and original symbols and Mladen has designed them with his team – such as Kostrena, Viškovo, Jelenje, Čavle, Čabar, Fužine, Crikvenica, Kraljevica, Lopar, Matulji, Mošćenička Draga and so on.

"Each coat of arms must tell its own story, and speak about what it represents. For example, in Matulji



The little Heraldic Art team



Creating the coat of arms of the Crljen family



municipality the basis of the coat of arms is the fact that it is known as a transport hub and that it is located at the crossroads of roads which lead towards Slovenia, Rijeka and Opatija. This is why that "Y" emerged in the centre. Another important thing is the bell-ringers (zvončari) who are an indispensable part of Matulji tradition, this is why we built three bells into the coat of arms, and then we designed it in a line with heraldic rules", Mladen reveals about his work process. He emphasises how it is most important that a coat of arms is as simple as possible so that it can be understandable and transmits a good



Associations, towns, municipalities, counties, companies, pubs and citizens – everyone wants their own unique and original coat of arms

message to those who look at it.

Apart from official coats of arms for local self-governmental units, due to which the Heraldic Art company has become the most famous in Croatia, personal and family coats of arms have also become popular over recent years.

"With such coats of arms, it is important that the man knows what he wants, that it has a story which he wants to tell. It can turn into a historical and family legacy, it can also be the future for new generations, or one's own ethical principles, a success which one has achieved in work. So those who are proud of their profitability choose a lion which is bellicose, whilst those who are proud of their loyalty and diligence choose a crane which never sleeps. Every symbol has its own story, and every story has its own symbol", Mladen concludes.



The restoration of the old folk custom of the Dubašnica “kolejani” carol singing shows that this is not just simply, tradition and custom-filled partying but primarily an event that encourages and promotes community, collaboration and mutual assistance

After many years of an organisational break, in Malinska, the Dubašnica carol singing has begun again – a traditional event in which the local people of the Malinska-Dubašnica municipality have revived the old custom of their ancestors connected to carol singing. The Dubašnica carol singers, who were organised the last time back in 1988-89, brought the islanders a breath of old times, tradition and folklore, in other words, the customary richness of which the inhabitants of this part of the island of Krk are extremely proud.

This carol singing is an old traditional folk custom which in

the area of Dubašnica consists of three main parts – the capture of a king and queen, carol singing through the villages of Dubašnica and a big wedding party – a final ceremony with which the general happiness is concluded with a grand party as the members of the organising committee explain.

At the final ceremony as many as four hundred people took part, the same number as the previous carol singers organised 26 years before, and which by the number of participants is considered as a record! Tomislav Dujmović was selected as the king of the Dubašnica carol singing

whilst the title of queen, which is also regularly held by a man, was entrusted to Ivica Žgombić.

It can be safely said that this old custom has been nurtured for at least 150 years in the Dubašnica area.

At the end of the ceremonial mass celebrated on St Stephen's Day in the Parish Church of St Apollinaris in Bogovići, the faithful headed towards the exit where the local men, members of the carol singing committee, grabbed the king and queen at the church doors and by carrying them on their shoulders showed them to the delighted crowd. The peak of the enthronement of the king Tomislav Dujmović and his queen, Ivica Žgombić, took place in the form of a ceremonial parade, accompanied by the sounds of sopele pipes during which the king, placed on a chair, was first carried around the church in Bogovići and then at the head of a long line of Dubašnica people around the village.

Together with the carol-singing group of local men, the royal couple then visited all the Dubašnica villages and socialised, rejoiced and sang with the people there. At the homes of people who had some kind of misfortune or problem, who could not or who were not prepared to have fun and sing, according to the good old custom, upon this occasion they helped and prayed together, showing that is not just mere, tradition and custom-filled partying but primarily an event that encourages and promotes community, collaboration and mutual assistance.



Dubašnica carol singing – ceremonial enthroning of the king and queen



The long line of Dubašnica people follows and celebrates its king



The carol singing is a customary richness which the islanders are extremely proud of

STREET LAMPS

A step to a new beginning



Street Lamps sellers on Korzo in Rijeka

About one hundred of them throughout Croatia – the homeless and socially endangered people – six times a year, with an armful of newspapers, go out to the squares and streets of Croatian towns and sell them to their fellow citizens. This is their story

They have nothing in life – nothing – apart from the hope of a better future. By their own or someone else's fault, a combination of unfortunate circumstances, they have found themselves at the very bottom, on the margins of society, from where it is difficult to escape. Without work, without a home, without money, on the street... However, they have not given up, they have not allowed fate to win over them, but with the help of volunteers and collaborators of the Franciscan order, they have made the first step towards their new life, and become sellers of the *Ulične svjetiljke* (Street Lamps). About one hundred of them throughout Croatia – homeless and socially vulnerable people whom society has forgotten – six times a year with an armful of newspapers, go out to the squares and streets of Rijeka, Zagreb, Split,

Zadar, Pula and Varaždin, and sell them to their fellow citizens for 1 euro a copy. Half of the money goes towards the costs of printing, whilst the other stays with the seller. Perhaps these 50 cents do not have a great material value for the average Croatian citizen, although they will help pay the bills, rent, food and ensure the minimal living conditions, however, their symbolic value is far greater – the sellers have come out boldly in front of their fellow citizens, introduced themselves, shown their product and after a long time, they are paid for their work.

"We aimed primarily at the group which is incapable of working so that by the sale of the newspaper they can make something to live from. However, it is not just about "making money." This is a way to resocialisation, the return to society,



Confident of a new start



Colportage is their way towards resocialisation and the return to society

an opportunity to cope with life and get back on one's feet", explains Siniša Pucić, one of the initiators of this unique newspaper in Croatia.

The project which began in Rijeka gained great support with the public, and from the first edition in September fifty or so issues have been published so far. Almost all homeless people's stories are sad, however, the majority of their experiences are coloured with optimism rather than depressing notes.

"There are plenty of examples of people who due to the sale of Street Lights have succeeded in finding a new job. People have noticed them, read about their fates, become interested, and managed to find work, by themselves, with their friends or acquaintances... This is the main goal of this project – the sellers cannot deal with this forever, maybe a year or two, but for them, it can be a step towards a new chapter in life", concludes Siniša.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF TRADITIONAL VESSELS

Krk is richer after witnessing a long and rich maritime heritage

In Krk, an interpretation centre of the maritime heritage of the island of Krk has opened, and after a long and careful reconstruction a particularly important traditional boat is presented to the islanders

Krk is richer after witnessing a long and rich maritime heritage of generations of islanders. The interpretation centre has found a place in the town area at one of the most frequented points of Krk's old town core. The space has been enriched with exhibits of many valuable, old and authentic items – navigational instruments as well as original documents and photographs connected to maritime affairs fishing and sailing. There is also a place for the ship-modelling workshop of the famous, multi-awarded model boat maker from Krk, Željko Skomeršić.

In fact, it is Željko who is also most praiseworthy for the complete set up of the interpretation centre because the selected items are part of Željko's private collections created over many decades of the dedicated collector's work.

The grand party of the opening

of the new important element of the town's as well as island's tourist offer was "spiced up" with a presentation of the revitalised 9.5-metre-long Paolina bragozzo boat. This floating exhibit in the town harbour was joined by two previously renovated traditional vessels – the pasara Bodulka and the guc Bodula which together with the Paolina will make up a functioning and usable part of the display of the newly-created centre of the maritime heritage of the people of Krk.

The arrival of the Paolina in Krk's harbour is the culmination of many years of the effort, work and investment of the islanders dedicated to the preservation, revitalisation and presentation of the maritime heritage of this island. For the islanders the bragozzo (bragoc) is a particularly important traditional boat because it was in



fact with such, today totally absent, boats that until a few decades ago people intensively fished. These boats fished in such a way that two bragozzos sailed side by side, pulling a net behind them together. The working vessel, which the island fishermen adopted from their Venetian colleagues from Chioggia, is fitted with new sails as well as an engine which made the Paolina mobile and suitable for navigation even on windless days.



Željko Skomeršić the model boat maker and lover of the sea



The attractive display of Krk's maritime centre

This cross-border Croatian-Slovenian project under the title of 'Mala barka' ('Little boat') has been co-financed by funds from the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, as a leading partner, and the town of Krk and with a grant from the European Regional Development Fund (Interreg Slovenia-Croatia 2014-2020).



The reconstructed bragozzo, the 9.5-metre Paolina

MUSEUM OF APOXYOMENOS, MALI LOŠINJ

A global attraction on the Riva Lošinjskih Kapetana quayside

The story of Apoxyomenos ended fortunately, thirty years after the Belgian tourist René Wouters discovered and photographed him in the waters of Lošinj near the islet of Vela Orjula at a depth of 45 metres

Seventeen years after it was brought to the surface - the 192 cm tall bronze statue of Apoxyomenos returned to Mali Lošinj to be the only exhibit of the newly-built museum.

It is a unique museum dedicated to just one exhibit – Apoxyomenos, the bronze statue of an ancient athlete which had lain at the bottom of the Kvarner Bay for two millennia. There were two ideas that Apoxyomenos should end up in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb or in the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar. "However, with arguments, we proved that Lošinj deserved to have a place for Apoxyomenos

and for one such museum which would contribute to the cultural and historical heritage and both the offer and function of tourism in Lošinj", emphasised county prefect Mr Komadina at the time.

And so the story of Apoxyomenos ended, thirty years after the Belgian tourist René Wouters discovered and photographed him in the waters of Lošinj near the islet of Vela Orjula at a depth of 45 metres and seventeen years after he was raised to the surface on 27th April 1999. The restoration of the statue

lasted seven years, returning home after a tour of the world's museums in Florence, Paris, London and Los Angeles, and he regularly generated undivided enthusiasm amongst the professional and the wider public.

The museum is located in the 19th-century Kvarner Palace, a terrace house on the Riva Lošinjskih Kapetana waterfront which throughout history has experienced a number of reconstructions, yet today only its façade has been preserved.

The construction of the museum took almost four years and

was completed according to the design of architects Saša Randić and Idis Turato who won the architectural competition for the project of adapting the palace into a museum for the preservation and permanent display of the ancient statue which has enriched Croatia's and the world's cultural heritage.

The museum's display extends over four floors in six thematic rooms located in a specific architectural structure which was set in the space of the old palace.

After passing different experiences through colourful and impressive rooms, there follows the encounter with the bronze statue of the young Greek man. The sculpture of the bronze athlete 192 centimetres tall and weighing 300 kilogrammes is placed in a completely white room. It portrays a young athlete who has just finished a competition or exercising at the moment of relaxation and is preoccupied with cleaning his body of oil, sweat and dust. There are only eight such ancient statues preserved in the world, amongst which the Croatian Apoxyomenos stands out as the most faithful prototype.

The sculpture of Apoxyomenos is located in a completely white room



It is a unique museum in Mali Lošinj dedicated to just one exhibit – Apoxyomenos



Hall for film projections



The bronze statue of an ancient athlete was laid at the bottom of the Kvarner Bay for two millennia



The restoration of the statue lasted seven years

h i g h l i g h t s | opatija ©45° 20' 9.13" N, 14° 18' 38.62" E

CARNIVAL IN OPATIJA

All the secrets of Opatija's Balinjerada

Opatija's Balinjerada is a special and unique competition, one of the few that have succeeded to truly live up to Coubertin's thesis that taking part is more important than winning

Balinjerada is a legendary event which has made the boy's hobby of racing go-carts made mainly of wood whose wheels are ball bearings or "balinjere" in the local dialect, a first-class tourist and carnival spectacle where hundreds of participants are cheered along by thousands of spectators down Opatija's main street.

Most of the competitors in the Balinjerada prepare months in advance before it takes place. After designing their carnival masks, the stages of work are planned in which the greatest part belongs

to the making of the carts, i.e. the construction of the vehicle which will bear the allegorical car. Usually someone's garage or covered land is used as a workshop, even so, that in bad weather and rain the vehicle is in a safe place. Before construction begins, the concept needs to be well thought out.

It takes several hours a day, every day, and with skilled hands, it takes about a month to make the vehicle. About another two weeks are spent to make the structure that is built on top of it. Is it worth spending so much time just for the

one day of the show? Everyone will you tell you: "Yes, absolutely!"

In fact, it is the little things – the excitement felt at the start of the race, the grinding of the ball bearings on the way to the finish, the humour of the mask which the competitor has chosen, the grazed joints and torn trainers on the rough tarmac – all of these that make Balinjerada a special and unique competition, one of the few which have succeeded to truly live up to Coubertin's thesis that taking part is more important than winning. This is also demonstrated by the



Through a forest of balloons

The categories of the competitors' vehicles

There are four competitor categories in the Balinjerada, therein three of them are rated by speed and the fourth by their performance. Traditionally, the first to descend are the drivers of “monopatini”, which look similar to scooters, and are also set in motion in the same way, accelerating by foot against the tarmac to get up speed, whilst steering with their bodies and a steering wheel. Next come the single and two-seater “karići” carts – in both cases these are vehicles which are mostly simple structures that consist of a wooden board on which the drivers sit or lie, with three or four ball bearings fixed to the underside whilst on the top, there is a “rudder.” Since their early simple productions, over time the “karići” have evolved into real complex works of art, so amongst them can be seen real jet planes, the Flintstone’s family vehicle, copies of formula racing cars and other similar handiwork. Finally, the last category to descend in front of the thousands of spectators is the so-called “American vehicles” – real sliding “houses on ball bearings” followed by all the carnival groups as part of a great choreography.



A cheery group from Veprinac began work on their cart about two months before the Balinjerada festival



Allegorical cart number 133

award ceremony when not only the fastest are awarded but also the slowest, the youngest and oldest competitors, as well as the most beautifully decorated vehicle, and much more effort is made in the attempt that this annual descent from the Paris Hotel to the Imperial Hotel is as attractive as possible, but also as fast as possible.

Therefore this is why most of the Balinjerada's competitors prepare months in advance, whilst some individual participants would even say that the preparation lasts a lifetime.



As all previous years, at the head of the parade is its conceptual originator and the legendary singer Duško Jeličić Dule

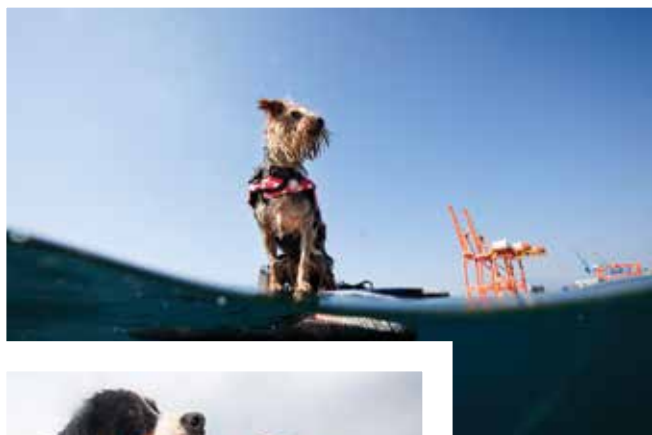


A political message

UNDERWATER DOGS, A PHOTO SESSION FOR PETS



600 underwater dogs in Petar Fabijan's lens



In this mass of floating barkers, it is difficult to choose the most beautiful because they are all cute in their own way

This is the joint project of Petar Fabijan and the 'Wanted... a Friend' association which enables dog owners to get professional photographs of their pets in the sea, and at the same time also raise the money needed for the work of the animal protection association

The sixth summer in a row already for the underwater dogs in Rijeka?

The news would sound disconcerting if it was not about a unique project called 'Underwater dogs', a photo session for pets which since 2012 has been organised at the Brajdica dog beach in Rijeka. This is the joint project of Petar Fabijan and the 'Wanted... a Friend' association which enables dog owners to get professional photographs of their pets in the sea, and at the same time also raise funds for the work of the mentioned animal protection association.

The first model, the first "underwater dog" was Petar's own adopted Roxy from where the idea of photographing more dogs sprouted. In this way, he joined the Rijeka 'Wanted... a Friend' Animal Protection Association and they began the 'Underwater dogs' project as a charitable act from which all the proceeds go to the association that finances

the veterinary services and other costs of caring for cats and dogs.

More than 600 dogs have been caught in Petar Fabijan's lens over the first six years of this venture. In this mass of floating barkers, it is difficult to choose the most beautiful because they are all cute in their own way.

"For me photographing dogs is a brilliant experience because the dogs are always different. Some are scared, some literally frightened when they see me, in other words, when they see a diver with a camera, but we always make contact and continue taking photographs. Sometimes the dogs need a bit of encouragement and so I need an assistant, a dog entertainer, whilst I take the pictures."

Petar has had no unpleasant experiences with dogs although once a dog did literally jump on him. The greatest difficulty in the work is fatigue because a whole day spent taking photographs with the heavy equipment is very demanding.



The first model was Petar's own adopted Roxy from where the idea of photographing more dogs sprouted

The equipment is designed for underwater photography where weight does not play a role, but when photographing the dogs it is frequently out of the water. Another difficulty in photographing dogs is that some of the hairy ones get tired of swimming before it is their turn to be photographed and so at the end, they are not in the mood to pose in front of the camera.

Naturally, all the dog owners are delighted to have a photograph of their pet in the sea as a result of the event. Even those owners whose dogs don't know how to or don't want to swim. For those lazy ones, Petar has various floating accessories, from surfboards to inflatable toys. He says that is essential to participate because that is the most important charitable aspect of this event which is unique in Croatia.



Members of the Rijeka 'Wanted... a Friend' Animal Protection Association

MOUNTAIN RIDERS MOTORCYCLE CLUB, DELNICE



Mountain Riders – the guardians of Gorski Kotar

Over the last 20 years the Mountain Riders have not just been active bikers they have also been so involved in the life of Delnice that today they are one of the most active of Delnice's associations. With their numerous acts, they have changed the attitude towards bikers as being dangerous guys who ride around too fast and drink too much

Not everyone who rides or owns a motorcycle is – a biker. For this kind of hobby it is necessary to invest a lot of love, effort and sacrifice, even money, as well as to try whenever it is possible in

various ways to help the environment in which you live and work.

It is the 20th anniversary of these mountain riders who with their powerful machines travel Croatia and Europe managing to

connect Delnice and Gorski Kotar with other lovers of the biker way of life. Fifteen years is not a particularly impressive anniversary, however, in the case of the Mountain Riders Motorcycle Club, it should be noted that in these fifteen years they have not just been active bikers they have also been so involved in the life of Delnice that today they are one of the most active of Delnice's associations. Moreover, with their numerous acts they have changed the negative attitude of some towards bikers as being dangerous guys who ride around too fast and drink too much.



Mountain Riders
in Leska forest



Without our wives and their support, we wouldn't have succeeded, emphasise the Riders



To be a biker is an expensive but great hobby



Each member of the Mountain Riders knows their obligations



Greetings from
Gorski Kotar!

A brief history of the Riders reveals how the club was founded on 26th September 2003 in Ravna Gora. As early as then, members of the club came from different regions of Gorski Kotar so they decided to highlight the geographical affiliation to the mountains in the name of the club by calling it the Mountain Riders Motorcycle Club.

Very important to them are the bike meetings which they try to organise every year and to which they try to attract as many friends, as well as local people from Delnice and other Gorski Kotar villages and beyond as possible. The response of bikers from other areas was excellent and so these gatherings are already well-known and enjoyed by many for the good company and music, and the tickets are always a voluntary contribution to some

charitable act. The last activity which they are slowly turning into a tradition is the so-called Bike Santas, i.e. a get together during Delnice Advent time when the bikers dress up as Santa Clauses and entertain the children and share out sweets. They entertain the children with gifts, their appearance and, of course, their powerful bikes.

For their relationship with their environment in 2012 the Mountain Riders received the Annual Award from the Town of Delnice, and just a year later the Charter of the Town of Delnice for their ten years of successful work and existence.

The Riders are very satisfied with their Clubhouse, in other words, the club's premises which became necessary because beforehand their organisation would just meet in the cafés. They achieved

everything by voluntary work, and the furnishings came almost entirely from donations. In the end, they were happy and satisfied because they now have an ideal space.

Regular blood donors

Members of the Mountain Riders Motorcycle Club can be seen at every voluntary blood-donating event in the Delnice region. Members who have been voluntary blood donors are prompted to join in with the event, and there are currently ten or so members in the club who regularly give blood.



There is no place in the Adriatic
which cannot be visited by kayak

A small Rab company for a big holiday on the Adriatic Sea

Joško Matušan began his business in 2008, at first with a small number of kayaks with a loan taken from the mortgage of his house. The kayaks had still not arrived on the island, but he already had a sold-out season

Joško Matušan with kayakers: adventure tourism is on the rise



Kayakers at the entrance of Zavrtnica Cove



Sea Kayak Croatia is one of the most famous brands on Rab



Joško Matušan "Jogi"



the first owners of sea kayaking companies in the Adriatic (Sea Kayak Croatia), located on the island of Rab. Jogi and his team are not classic guides, there is nothing traditional in his running of the company, the relationship with clients, doing the work – and this the key to his, i.e. their success!

Joško Matušan began his business in 2008, at first with a small number of kayaks with a loan taken from the mortgage of his house. The kayaks had still not arrived on the island, but he already had a sold-out season. The risky move bore fruit and today Sea Kayak Croatia is one of the most famous brands on Rab.

Guests come from all corners of the world, principally from Scandinavia, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, where kayaking has been more present for many years and has a large number of fans.

Sea Kayak Croatia offers one-day excursions by kayak around the island of Rab, however, what shaped and raised this company above the competition are the multi-day expeditions of the Adriatic – because there is no place on the Adriatic which cannot be visited by kayak. It is not uncommon to kayak rivers or national parks, hike around Velebit and visit the old town centres of Croatian cities.

What sets kayaking apart from others is that it is possible to access the most remote and beautiful places of the Adriatic coast.

There is a lot of work involved in the preparation of expeditions – in buying food, arranging the route, organising transfers, advice, the continuous correspondence and answering of inquiries. Upon their arrival, guests fill in a questionnaire about their experience, allergies, blood group and so on.

Of course, in order that everyone enjoys the kayaking, the organisation of the work takes a great deal of time, not to mention the bureaucracy and all those business needs which have no connection with kayaking.

The positive experiences are nevertheless much more than the negative. By kayaking in the sea, you will certainly visit places which have no contact with civilisation, and you will feel part of a top National Geographic documentary. Joško Matušan recalls how they rescued a griffon vulture from a cave, how he witnessed the birth of a dolphin just a few metres from his kayak, the rescue of a loggerhead sea turtle near Cres, the lambs of the steep sea cliffs of Rab's Kamenjak, a formation of migrating storks, the deer running around his tent...

The Croatian Adriatic is known as a nautical destination through which mainly travel fast ships and sailboats, and alongside the shore by many fans of water sports. However, sea kayaking is a novelty here, and it is only in the last ten years or so that this sport has been recognised in the tourist sense as an interesting new offer.

Joško Matušan, known in kayaker circles as "Jogi" is amongst

TORPEDO RUNNERS

Recreation that fills you with energy and good feelings

The Torpedo Runners sports initiative gathers together almost 150 members of whom about 10 compete in (half) marathons, trail races and other running competitions every week

Although it is recreational, which is not demanding at first, later it can overwhelm you and take more of your time, say members of the Torpedo Runners

Everybody runs. In recent years, the “fever of movement” has gripped a huge part of the population, both young and old, rich and poor, white and blue-collar workers, children and pensioners have all put on trainers and tracksuits. Hundreds of runners, united in motion, at Kantrida, Kostrena, Kastav, along Opatija’s Lungomare, on Molo Longo, on Učka, besides the sea, in the forest in the mountains every day pushing their physical and mental boundaries, enjoying that intoxicating feeling of “sweet pain” which comes from physical exertion. As though the whole of Rijeka, in line with its “fluid” name (Rijeka means

“river”), has suddenly set off...

One of the greatest merits for the ever-increasing numbers of runners who can be met on the streets and trails of Rijeka and the city’s surroundings goes to the Torpedo Runners, a sports initiative begun in 2014, which despite the fact that it is not organised like an association or club, brings together almost 150 members of whom 10 or so compete in (half) marathons, trail races and other running competitions every week.

Amongst the team which is constantly growing, there are people of all ages, professions and affinities, gathered together primarily with the aim of mutual support, socialising and communal improvement. They say it is always easier to run in a group, a group carries you, gives you strength, motivates and relaxes, and you always have someone you can ask for help and advice from.

Damjan Dabović is the fastest runner amongst the Torpedo

Runners as his colleagues say – whilst the majority take more than 2 hours to run a half-marathon, Damjan finishes it in 1 hour and 19 minutes. Over four years he has run in three marathons and climbed numerous winning podiums in long-distance races.

“After playing football, I began running, because for me it was the simplest – you can run wherever you want, when you want, you don’t need to find a team and you can create your own timetable for the sport. Running is a sport for everyone, an excellent recreation which fills you with energy and good feelings. With a little effort, I think everyone can come from the couch to running a half-marathon after six months. I believe that the majority of people who start running after a few years can also prepare for a marathon”, says Damjan.

Although at the start running is not timewise or financially demanding, over time it does take its toll in both areas. What are the most important tips? Well, apart from running – it’s about the equipment. The best advice is about the trainers because they are the key piece of kit.



Training time can reach up to 3-4 hours when training for a marathon



The Torpedo Runners got together in a running school, to maintain the group and keep each other motivated for further running



Torpedo Runners
Davorka Peran, Damjan Dabović and Aleksandra Deluka Tibljaš



MARINA MAVRINAC MATULJA,
WORLD FISHING CHAMPION

Only the fish don't love golden Marina

Marina has been fishing for 40 years as a competitor, and she is employed as a teacher at the school in Ičići, the mother of three children and - a world champion

Croatia and Lovran have a world-fishing champion, in the Republic of South Africa Marina Mavrinac Matulja won a gold medal at the 27th World Championship Shore Angling, and then as a member of the team, she also won a bronze medal. This news overjoyed the people of Lovran who prepared a magnificent homecoming, which was as magnificent as her success.

"Because of the top result I experienced such a great welcome in my town, these kinds of things are reserved only for football, tennis or handball players. They lit flares in my honour, played music on the pier, it was all very emotional. I arrived from Africa in short sleeves, but with all the great excitement and adrenaline I wasn't cold at all."

Before leaving she didn't expect to come back as a world champion.

"It is said: will they or won't they. Sometimes the details decide, one fish can be crucial, but for me, everything down there went smoothly. The strong wind that blew up the sand and buried all my equipment didn't bother me, because I was used to the wind on

the boat when we went sailing. I calmly cast and pulled, I didn't feel any kind of stress. I realised that the stay in Africa was an asset for me to move away from the everyday rhythm and that's how I behaved. This kind of thinking helped me a lot, I fished with a smile. I knew that we can all compete with the best, Croatian fishing has always been amongst the world's best."

Marina has practically been fishing forever, in her family there were many anglers and so she was raised like that from an early age.

"I went fishing with my father when I was very little, when I was eight I started competing in our Zubatac club. My father Bruno is a famous angler, he was a European champion from an anchored boat, and my grandfather Piero was a Yugoslavian fish trolling champion. My father was a member of the national team for years, he has team medals and was also a trainer for the men's national team. He always gave me advice, even today when he no longer competes, but he is always diving, digging for worms. When I was little, he would tell to first of take a

mask and dive the area that I would fish, to see exactly where the fish were moving, where a grotto was, and they were the important things."

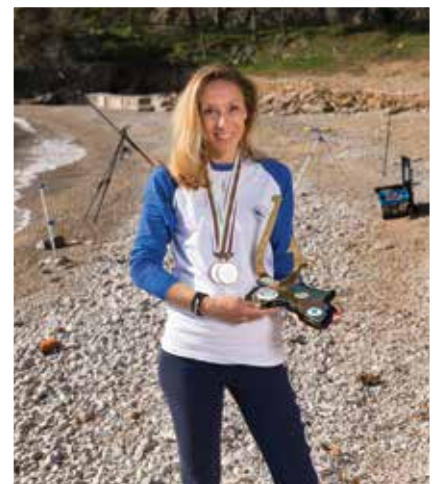
She has been fishing for 40 years as a competitor but has never got tired of it. To be successful



Marina's father Bruno is a famous angler, he was a European champion from an anchored boat, and her grandfather Piero was a Yugoslavian fish trolling champion



Good equipment is necessary, it is a big factor for success... - Marina Mavrinc Matulja




Golden Marina with her world champion's medal

angler is not easy, it takes a lot of fishing, a lot of training, to have knowledge and experience, and sometimes a little luck too.

"It is most important to believe in yourself and not to be nervous."

Marina is employed as a teach-

er in the extended-stay school in Ičići, a mother of three children, and still managed to prepare to become world champion. She successfully infected her children with fishing, although they have become overwhelmed with another love - sailing.

sport | [rab](#)  44° 45' 31.02" N, 14° 45' 34.28" E

VITOMIR MARIČIĆ, ADVENTURER AND SPORTSMAN

The man with 2,000 interests

Versatility is Vitomir's virtue and flaw, whilst change is the only constant. The list of sports which he takes part in is richer because of several extreme ones. He is focussed on freediving and the training and research connected to diving, however, he is also active as a personal trainer, cameraman and photographer

Highline training on Veli Vrh (Učka)





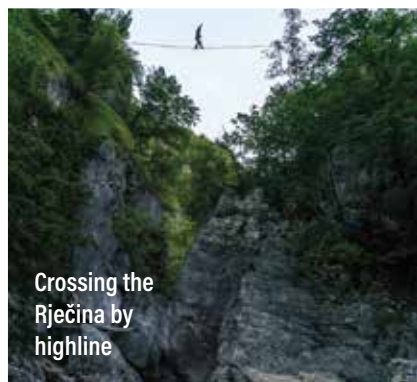
Kvarner and the surroundings have fantastic locations for sport climbing

We had the chance to read about this sportsman from Kvarner 6-7 years ago on our website when he was awarded by the Red Cross and the Croatian National Board for his contribution to the rescue service, in whose team he also trained at that time. At that time the title announced "The man with the 1,000 interests", but today it would be closer to 2,000 interests. In the meantime, he has travelled the whole world, climbed various peaks on every continent, organised several large expedition projects, fitted climbing sites, opened schools, finished college, written, exhibited photographs, made films, won trophies from triathlons to weightlifting as a sportsman, and also had success as a trainer. Versatility is Vitomir's virtue and flaw, whilst change is the only constant. Today he is focussed on freediving and the training and research connected to diving, however, he is also active as a personal trainer, cameraman and photographer. In

the repertoire of sports which he takes part in over the recent years, if we exclude Olympic weightlifting, in Vitomir's case there are more and more extreme sports. Aren't they reserved for the young and slightly crazy people, we ask.

"Extreme sports are not in fact so extreme. They are less competitive, more outdoors and often, in fact, safer than some standard sports. The crazier a sport looks, the more safety there is for the people who do it. Injuries happen everywhere unfortunately, and especially at the high level of effort. But at the same time, our body has an incredible ability to rehabilitate. Life has its ups and downs, as it is with everything. For me, extreme sports are much more alluring because they have a distinct mental component and give me the excuse to stay in some fantastic places."

To the question of whether he manages to live from such sports, to travel and so on, Vitomir says: "It would be wonderful, but it isn't so, at least not yet. Sport is also part of my job, as a personal trainer, consultant, via diving classes, workshops in various sports, training or lectures I manage to make a living, and here and there sponsors also jump in. I am also involved in business connected to photography and video making, and here and there they need me as a model and that is just enough income to get to tomorrow."



Crossing the Rječina by highline



The Kantrida pool offers the best conditions in the world for the training of athletes and amateurs, says Vitomir Maričić



Vitomir Maričić, a sportsman from head to foot, and sometimes a model too

VEDRAN RUŽIĆ, PAINTER AND MUSICIAN



**As I paint
I hear music,
and whilst
I play –
I see colours**

I am most happy when I spend half the day painting and the other half playing music –
Vedran Ružić in his studio in Volosko

As I didn't want to neglect any of my obsessions, in the end, I enrolled and finished painting at the Academy of Applied Arts in Rijeka. The theme of my thesis was, of course – the connection of music and painting

Vedran Ružić turned 30 and has already established himself in two different careers – painting and music, for which he has won a handful of awards: a Status, Porin and two awards from Matulji municipality. However, the young jazz musician and painter from Matulji would say that these two arts with him act as a harmonious whole, because whilst he paints he hears music and whilst he plays – he sees colours.

1 / Are you are a musician who paints or a painter who plays music?

"Uh, that's a difficult question. When they ask me whether I prefer painting or music I reply saying that it's like they're asking me if I'd rather be without an ear or an eye. My first love was art, after that, I seriously began to be involved in music, and

now I care for both my passions. I am most happy when I spend half the day painting and the other half playing music. Then as I was already infected with art, the time came for enrolling in secondary school, I chose secondary art, however, my parents advised me that I should choose some serious profession. So I enrolled in electrical engineering, and later in an agreement with my parents, I enrolled in the Hospitality Faculty in Ika, to have a secure profession. I achieved a bachelor's degree, after which I went to the music academy in Klagenfurt where I finished my first year. At the same time, I started painting again, began work as a museum technician in the Croatian Museum of Tourism and took a break from the music academy which I didn't return to. I then decided that I didn't want to neglect any of my obsessions,

so I enrolled and finished at the Academy of Applied Arts in Rijeka. The theme of my thesis was, of course – the connection of music and painting."

2 / In which projects do you successfully combine your two loves at the same time?

"My goal is to combine jazz music with other arts. I thought about how to create one complete project, I didn't want the story to be reduced to just me painting on stage. So I began composing in a studio, and at the same time, I developed an idea for an art film which John Kardum and Ira Tomić made. In this way, the multimedia project Spiritual Market was developed. They made a film which was developed on the basis of paintings inspired by music, and this film controls how we have to play – when the scenes change, we change the rhythm and we go from composition to composition. This concept was well-received, we had twenty promotions in one year and in very nice places, from Opatija to Vienna."

ZVJEZDAN RUŽIĆ, MUSICIAN

I live for music and I want to share it with the people

My character is such that I love to constantly explore myself and the limits of my comfort, I love to explore this rich world of music and listen to all styles

The concert in the middle of the lake in Zagreb's Maksimir Park

Music is life, and not an idea about life – Zvezdan Ružić

Zvezdan Ružić, a young pianist from Matulji (born in 1988), he has already achieved a string of immeasurable career successes and crazy creative projects. He already owns five Porin awards and six Status awards, three albums (soon to release a fourth), has toured China, and this summer has been remembered for his performances "in water": as warming up he lowered his piano and mellotron into the Rječina River, and not long after that he held a fantastic concert in the middle of the lake in Zagreb's Maksimir Park, which he reached by boat...

1 / You collaborate in diverse projects – from pop music to 2 Cellos...

"I've never been an advocate for purism, and especially not for jazz elitism. If music is a copy of life, if the world is a "global village" where we all try to spread our horizons, if jazz is totally free of limits in every way – how is it possible for someone who loves, plays and lives jazz in 2019 declare what is "real" jazz and what is "fake"? It doesn't exist, there is only good and bad

music – something that you like and something that you want to listen to. My character is such that I love to constantly explore myself and the limits of my comfort, I love to explore this rich world of music and listen to all styles, to soak up all of those charms of music independently of whether that same charm is written in pop, rock, punk, classical or jazz music. Music is life, and not an idea about life; an idea comes out of your head and has its limits, whilst music comes from the heart and into the heart, and there are no limits there."

3 / Can jazz reach a wider circle of listeners?

"I think that is all a matter of vision. If an artist believes that this music is intended for a small number of people and that it is difficult to listen to – the audience will read his "hidden message" that he's sending out. Due to this kind of attitude the same artist will decide there is no need to make the effort to advertise his concerts, that there is no sense in trying too hard about the production of an

album, the look of the album cover and other similar things. Then a critic will write how jazz has no audience because it is difficult and incomprehensible. Another option is when the artist believes that his music is something that is very important to him, something that he lives for and something that he wants to share with people who that music will inspire, entertain, relax or sadden. Then that same artist will work on every detail of his music and then the people will recognise his hidden message that invites the people. And then the impression will be something different and it will suddenly look as though everything makes sense and that jazz has its audience. People love good music, they love nice stories and it is not true that jazz is on the margins. I'm not trying to break the stereotypes, in fact, long ago I stopped dealing with the situation on the stage, what people should and should not do. Long ago I decided to deal with myself and my story, and then with that to be the change that you want to see in the stage."

e c o e t n o | begovo razdolje 45° 18' 28.96" N, 14° 53' 48.22" E

THE FRANČIŠKOVIĆ FAMILY FARM

A guarantee of quality from Begovo Razdolje

Bojan Frančičković: The crossover to the
production of cheese brought us new values



The Francišković family farm has been the largest milk producer in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County for years, however, they recently decided to add other dairy products made during the processing of milk to their dairy production. The interest was so great that they have no stock

The examples which the Francišković family farm from Begovo Razdolje offers are, unfortunately, very rare in Croatia, a country which has the ideal conditions for the development of agriculture in which too few people are involved, particularly young people. With the Francišković family farm, this is not the case. The business which was begun by Zvonko and Marica Francišković in the 1990s was taken on by their son Bojan and his wife Biljana eight years ago. So today Marica and Zvonko have real heirs in Bojan and Biljana, and to these four should be added the two youngest - little Ema and 10-year-old David.

They all live in the paradise of Begovo Razdolje, but they all work hard, Bojan tells us who at the question about the motives for taking over the management of the family farm eight years ago says it was logical.

"My brother and I had helped our parents with their work since our childhood, we learned how to work hard and so I didn't plan anything else, and it is great that my wife Biljana has joined me in this. In 2010, the company was transferred to my name, but everything else remained the same, and that means that we continue to work together and try to ensure an income to live from", says Bojan Francišković.

The Francišković family farm has been the largest milk producer in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County for years, however, they recently decided to add other dairy products made during the processing of milk to their dairy production.

"We produced about 180,000 litres of milk per year. But, after the farm prices began to fall, we turned to processing and now we have about 100,000 litres a year which goes into a milk vending machine located in Ravna Gora, for selling



Everything stays in the family - the Franciškovićs (from the left: David, Bojan, Zvonko, Biljana, Ema and Marica)

Part of the palette of the products from the Francišković family farm



and processing. The crossover to the production of cheese brought us new values and I regret that we did not start this earlier. It took us six months to get the cheese factory ready. And in total, we invested about 66,000 euros in the setup of the premises, the cheese cauldron and the various attestations and permits. We began with our mother's knowledge because she had worked for years with cheese and we use her recipes for the škripavac cheese and curd, and for the semi-hard, hard and fresh cheeses we constantly contact Samir Kalit, the head of the office of the Faculty of Agriculture and a world-class evaluator of cheese. He visits us several times a year and together we work on improving our quality.

From the very beginning, we insisted on the highest quality and this has proved to be correct because everything that we produce, we sell without problems. Sales are made at fairs, on doorsteps and a number of local restaurants, and



In the cheese factory

it can be seen that we are doing well by the awards and acknowledgements that we have received."

Seven products were added to the basic milk production at the Francišković family farm: they started with škripavac cheese and curd and continued with hard, the semi-hard cheeses and then yoghurt, fresh cheese and whey. "Finally, we don't sell milk for the sum of 0.33 euros, but by the processing, we raise the value and earn more, and buyers are not a problem. We collaborate really well with Fužine's famous Bitoraj restaurant and several other restaurants and taverns on the island of Krk and in Ravna Gora. Along with that peo-



The secret of cottage cheese

ple come to buy the products from us, and we also sell in Rijeka and at fairs", said Biljana Francišković.

The restaurant offers
refreshment for body and soul

The Trsatika Restaurant
Rijeka, Šetalište J. Rakovca 33
Telefon i fax: 051/217-455
E-mail: trsatika@trsatika.hr

The terrace is a real paradise for the eyes

Trsatika was opened in May 2012 to the joy of a large number of lovers of tasty morsels, and when the beautiful view of Rijeka bay offered from the two terraces which can host up to two hundred guests is added to this, then the experience is complete.



The Trsatika Restaurant is situated in the space of the National Reading Room, a zero-category monument. Nearby is located the Church of Our Lady of Trsat and the Franciscan monastery. Trsatika was opened in May 2012 to the joy of a large number of lovers of tasty morsels, and when the beautiful view of Rijeka bay offered from the two terraces which can host up to two hundred guests is added to this, then the experience is complete.

The interior area is a tastefully designed restaurant totalling about two hundred square metres and it can accommodate about 110 guests. The terrace in the summer months is a real paradise for the eyes, because besides the beautiful view, the thousands of twinkling lights over Rijeka is an unforgettable experience. It is an ambience in which you will feel comfortable because of the rich selection of specialities, especially from the



Superb meat, fancy salads
and irresistible sweets

Kvarner and Primorje region, and the owner Vjekoslav Lazić with his staff will do everything so that you will want to come back.

Gourmet burger

Ingredients: 250 gm minced baby beef seasoned to a traditional recipe, 20 gm of cooked ham and 20 gm of smoked cheese

Mix the ingredients and roll into a ball shape. Roll the mixture into the lung pleura of a pig, cook on a grill with charcoal for four minutes on all sides. Serve the final burger with homemade cream on the top.

Tramerka tavern
A. Mohorovičića 15, Volosko
51410 Opatija
Tel. 051/ 701-707

The ambience
of the tavern

The place that even Lonely Planet praises

The tavern took its name from the islet of Tramerka near Zadar and the owner Kristijan Ivančić points out that the name combined his two great passions and superbly describes the Robinson Crusoe spirit which characterises his life and work

Beneath a stone arch, in a really unique location in the old heart of Volosko, between the steps and stone houses with wooden shutters the Tramerka tavern, one of the top gastronomic places in the town which is famous for its large number of excellent restaurants found its spot. Lonely Planet, the world's largest tourist guide also praises the ambience of the restaurant located in the pleasant shade of a cellar of an old town house and advertises Tramerka

as a "top recommendation" on its site. Of course, the atmosphere and location are no guarantee for the quality of a restaurant, however, in



RECIPE: Gnocchi with "forgotten" fish

This dish is dedicated to fish that are rarely found on guests' tables, and the "forgotten" fish, in this case, is the stargazer, with which as ingredients are also used dried tomatoes, olives and salted dentex roe. Add dried tomatoes and olives to the garlic and the fish fillets. This is flambéed, and after flambéing roe is added and a little fish soup. Olive oil and pepper are used as binding. It is served with homemade gnocchi.

the case of Tramerka that guarantee is given by the owner Kristijan Ivančić, because the passion with which he approaches his work can rarely find an equal in the hospitality business – he knows every dish and foodstuff, as well as every glass of wine which arrives at his guest's table down to the smallest detail.

The tavern took its name from the islet of Tramerka near Zadar and the owner Mr Ivančić pointed out that the name combined his two great passions and superbly describes the Robinson Crusoe spirit which characterises his life and work.

"I love the sea, as well as cuisine, and I combined these two loves in this tavern. So, most of the menus offer fish, although rarely do we know the day before what we will offer our guests – what will be the specials of the day, what foods we will use – because we only offer fresh foods which we buy from the local fishermen and at the local markets. This is why we put the menu together on a daily basis, only when we see what we have at our disposal", Kristijan explains.



As soon as guests arrive they are cared for by the friendly staff

Aerosteak Restaurant
Grobnik, Soboli 35, Čavle
Tel. 051/250-193

Grobnik style Florentine steak

Since the quality of the dishes in Aerosteak is based on the maturing of the meat, the preparation of the meat itself is simple and does not demand any kind of special technique, but what is “turning” on the grill has a superb taste which can be witnessed in the photographs of the Grobnik style Florentine steak on a bed of rocket with a side dish of roasted peppers, tomatoes, potatoes and courgettes.



would like to highlight the authentic potato polenta with Grobnik cheese, aero-roast beef (baby beef on rocket with pine nuts and crumbled goat's cheese), baby beef carpaccio, the homemade bread... homemade clear and cream soups plus a really unusual and unique oxtail soup. There is also pasta which we make ourselves, we are proud of using seasonal foodstuffs which are always great for meat, from mushrooms to pumpkins to various salads... A special part of the offer is the dessert, comprised of sweets which we make ourselves and we offer a dozen sorts each day”, says Dario.

The restaurant you can also reach by plane

In Aerosteak they decided to turn to an offer in which they achieve the best possible quality. This is why this place is a paradise for those who love meat

We are the only restaurant in the region which, in addition to car and motorcycle, is possible to reach by plane, half-jokingly, Dario Andrić, the owner of the Aerosteak restaurant located at the Grobnik sports airfield tells us. Moreover, it is thanks to the airfield that Dario in opening the restaurant determined the first part of its name, and the second part then came about with the decision that the offer would be based on steaks. Today it is clear that this “specialisation” was

a good decision. Namely, by the second year of its work Aerosteak deserved to be included on the official list of the 100 best Croatian restaurants from where it has not slipped since then, very quickly it also earned the Kvarner Food mark of quality. Articles about Aerosteak can also be found in several excellent culinary monographs... in short, Aerosteak has acquired a name and has become a brand and in the world of gourmets, particularly those who enjoy meat, it has turned into an unmissable destination.

“Since coming to the restaurant we have been trying to delight the guest with friendly staff, a pleasant ambience which has been arranged in a modernly archaic style, using natural materials. As we want to host each guest and offer them a culinary pleasure from their starter to dessert, from the starter menu I



A rich platter of side dishes

JIST

Široli 27, 51216 Viškovo

Working times, except

Mondays: 1pm – 11pm

Tel. +385 (0)51 374 597

website: www.jist.hr

Croatian fine dining in Viškovo

We wanted to create a restaurant that would offer a different concept to that which exists elsewhere, a place that people wouldn't mind travelling a hundred kilometres to reach by car. And they did.

Only local foodstuffs, the maximum dedication to the details and the offer that almost relies entirely on their own preparation of the produce are the basic determinants of a new gastronomic concept called Croatian fine dining which is practised by the restaurant JIST in Široli, Viškovo.

"The philosophy of the restaurant is that we only use Croatia foodstuffs and local and our own



The fridge for the dry maturing of meat – a dry ager – in which the meat sits for at least four weeks, which at the same time is also the secret of its superb taste



Head chef Darjan Urdih

produce and we have called it Croatian fine dining. We do not work with readymade produce, we practically prepare all the dishes, except the cheeses, ourselves – from the bread and pasta to pâté, salami and sausages to the sweets. We wanted to create a restaurant which would offer a different concept to that which exists elsewhere, a place that people wouldn't mind travelling a hundred kilometres to reach by car. And it has happened because we get visitors from Zagreb, Ljubljana, Trieste and Dubrovnik who purposely come to our restaurant", says head chef Darjan Urdih.

For the JIST restaurant, the young chef created an inventive menu based exclusively on meat dishes, which feature the standard favourites of the barbecue vie for the favour of the guests and the traditional dishes of this region which are interpreted in a contemporary way.

"Our speciality is the fridge for



The inventive menu is based exclusively on meat dishes

the dry maturing of meat – a dry ager – in which we let the meat sit for at least four weeks, which at the same time is also the secret of its superb taste. During the dry maturing the meat loses a certain percentage of its moisture, and enzymes are also released which give it a full flavour", says Darjan.

Croatian wine and craft beer

Apart from the menu, Croatian products are also present in the offer of rakijas, spirits, as well as the wine list which offers twenty Croatian labels, and for beer fans, there is a rich list of drinks from local craft breweries.



Franica is right by the sea, along Baška's picturesque Palada, recognisable by its spacious and shady terrace

'Franica' Bistro-Trattoria
Ribarska 39, 51523
Baška, island of Krk
Tel. 051 860 023
<http://www.franica.hr/>



Seafood risotto

A place that breathes with tradition and heritage

The dishes on offer are based on everything that our ancestors enjoyed eating in Baška. Although often prepared in a "slightly different" way...

The 'Franica' Bistro-Trattoria has for many years been the place to which lovers of good food and drink return, especially everything that bears the notes of being local, authentic of the island and Baška. The story of Franica is full of tradition. The locale itself has a century-old tradition. The establishment located right by the sea, along Baška's picturesque Palada is easy to recognise by its spacious, shady, wild vine-covered terrace where even in the height of summer people pleasantly enjoy the local dishes of fresh fish, Baška lamb, various fish and meat dishes as well as a selection of homemade pasta prepared in a way, as its owner, Pavica Čabrijan pointed out to us presenting her bistro-trattoria, that the local grandmothers did – coloured with the aromas of rosemary, sage, olive oil and selected wines, especially Žlahtina.

"Franica is, just as we imagined

at the start, and has become a place which breathes with tradition and heritage, amongst other things it also offers dishes based almost exclusively on everything that our ancestors enjoyed eating in Baška. Although often prepared in a "slightly different" way, we only offer local fresh foodstuffs, in other words, fish and shrimp from the Senj Channel which we all know are the best, and which we always buy from the local fishermen. It is the same with the tomatoes and vegetables from small family farms from the surrounding villages (mostly Jurandvor), the homemade šurlica pasta, macaroni and all the rest which are part of our culinary story which we gladly share with fans of good, local cuisine", says our interviewee.

The main offer in Franica as we have mentioned are the fish which, depending on what is found in the crates delivered to them by the fishermen in the morning, are prepared for the daily menu in the ways that best suit each individual fish. Therefore, found on the daily menu are also found classic grilled fish dishes, and more often brodetto, maneštra (minestrone) and so on.



Black macaroni with vegetables and shrimps



The owners of Franica are former members of the punk group Paraf Pavica and Zdravko Čabrijan – with successor Rina Čabrijan



The staff of the Franica restaurant

The Vagabundina Koliba inn
Ravno 7, Bribir
Tel. 051/248-708
Non-working day: Monday

A very special restaurant, in fact, a brand

Draženka and Vladimir Savić
have worked at
Vagabundina Koliba for 22 years

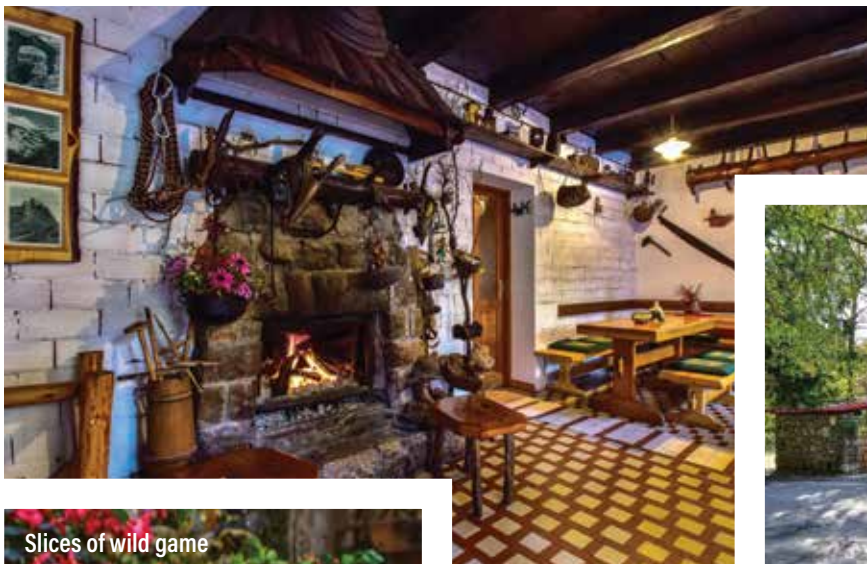
In Vagabundina Koliba (the Vagabond's Hut) we were the first to offer nettle rissoles, soups and salads of wild vegetables and mushrooms, wholegrain cakes made without eggs... Their beginning was not easy and they often used to hear that nobody would come because people are not goats

There are several excellent restaurants in the area of the green and blue county who, with what they offer, have created exceptional recognisability, in other words, as they say today, they have become a brand. The mountain lodge Vagabundina Koliba which is located in the peace of the Bribir forest at 864 metres above sea level at the address of Ravno 7, i.e. on the road that via Fužine and Lič connects Bribir and Novi Vinodolski, meaning Gorski Kotar and the Croatian Littoral, also undoubtedly belongs to these restaurants.

Since 1996 the owners of Vaga-

bundina Koliba have been Draženka and Vladimir Savić who over two decades have carried out a real little gastronomic revolution, achieving a name and reputation even outside of Croatia. It is interesting that neither Draženka or Vladimir were caterers by profession.

"22 years ago even before we took over Vagabundina Koliba it was famous as a special restaurant because it is far away from large settlements, there was no electricity and people ate by candlelight and everything was kind of special. To all of this we added a macrobiotic choice of food, and motives I



Vagabundina Koliba has always been known as a special restaurant because it was far away from larger settlements, and where there was no electricity and people ate by candlelight



Slices of wild game



Pumpkin soup



The "Vagabund" mixed platter of meat, vegetables and cereals

RECIPE: Nettle rissoles

- approx. 3 grams of young nettle leaves
- 1 gram of soya flakes
- 1 large onion, 4 garlic cloves
- breadcrumbs
- oil, flour, salt and pepper

Briefly boil the nettles in salted water, drain and slice them. Sauté the onion and garlic in a little oil. Cook the soya flakes in warm salted water, then drain them well. Mix everything together, add some breadcrumbs if necessary. Make small balls then roll them in flour, press them slightly in the palm of your hand and fry them in hot oil.



found in my own life. Namely, due to health reasons, I had to eat a balanced meal, therefore those that have no meat and so I already had a number of planned recipes and dishes. Why not offer those to guests as well I thought. My husband agreed and soon we began to offer, for example, nettle rissoles, pumpkin soup, wild vegetable soups, salads of natural plants, mushroom soups, cakes based on naturally picked fruits, wholegrain cakes made without eggs... the beginning was not easy and we often used to hear that nobody would come because people are not goats. However, we didn't give up and we began to get more and more guests attracted by this offer. Of course, alongside

that we offer a number of other dishes, however, our focus is always on the originality of this place."

Their season starts, depending on the weather, between Easter and 1st May, and they work constantly until the beginning of October, after that only on Saturdays and Sundays and holidays or by appointment.

How original Vagabundina is can be seen in the fact that their number of regular German guests jokingly call them the Hexenhäuschen or Witch's House, alluding, of course, to the original naturally prepared food.

Buying intelligence



In olden times our people, those who were not exactly gifted with intellect, thought that they could buy it. When the people for Gorski Kotar wanted to joke with the people from the coast, they liked to tell this story:

Once upon a time, there was a place by the sea. In that place, the people were less intelligent and their neighbours would always take advantage of them. And, indeed, they met once to agree on what to do to become somewhat cleverer so that no one would take advantage of them.

One of them, who considered himself the cleverest, answered and said to them:

"Why, brothers, there is nothing else for it, we must buy our intelligence somewhere. I have heard that one Jew over the sea sells intelligence for 50 forints. Let's raise some money and send

three of our men on a boat to the Jew to get some intelligence."

Everyone agreed to it immediately. Three of the cleverest set off in a boat to get some intelligence and find the Jew and tell him what they were missing. The Jew promises that he will bring them a small box with enough intelligence for their own village. And lo and behold, after a little while there he came carrying a small box full of intelligence, and he tells them:

"Here is some intelligence for you, but be careful that it doesn't escape from the little box when you open it!"

They gave the Jew 50 forints for his service and got back onto their boat. However, on the way, the three of them decide to take half of the intelligence for themselves and to give only the other half to the people in the village. They agree to open the little box, but as soon as

they do a mouse escapes from it. Not knowing what to do now that the intelligence had escaped from the little box, they were slightly worried, but, as they were the cleverest in the village, they realised that it was no big problem because luckily the mouse was still on the boat.

When they arrived home, they told their people that they had done their job but that their intelligence was hidden on the boat. This is why they immediately pulled the boat onto dry land and covered it with the planks on every side so that their intelligence did not escape from it. In the following days, everyone who wanted to do something clever went onto the boat to nail down a plank. However, after some time they realised for themselves that the intelligence hidden in the boat did not help them, so they went back to doing everything the way they had done before.

Primorje - Gorski Kotar County | towns and municipalities



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Town of Krk

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Municipality of Čavle

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Municipality of Lovran

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Town of Mali Lošinj

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Municipality of Malinska - Dubašnica

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Town of Novi Vinodolski

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Municipality of Lopar

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Municipality of Mošćenička Draga

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Municipality of Ravna Gora

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